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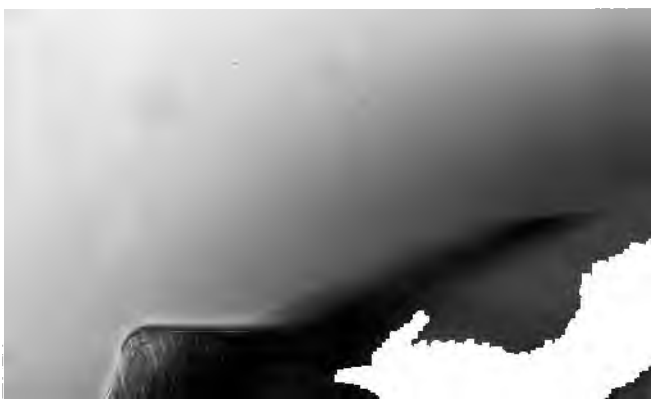

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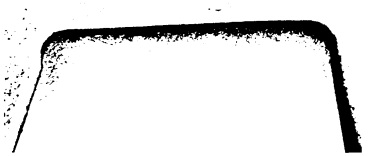

Robert ~~[illegible]~~ Jarvis

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THE HUT AT BOULDER CREEK.

LONDON: JAMES NISBET & CO., 21 BERNERS STREET.

WRECKED BUT NOT RUINED.

By R. M. BALLANTYNE,

AUTHOR OF "THE LIFEBOAT;" "THE LIGHTHOUSE;" "THE IRON HORSE;" "UNDER THE WAVES;" "RIVERS OF ICE;" "SHIFTING WINDS," ETC. ETC.

LONDON:

JAMES NISBET & CO., 21 BERNERS STREET.

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NOTE.

PLAN OF THIS MISCELLANY.

THERE is a vast amount of interesting information, on almost all subjects, which many people, especially the young, cannot attain to because of the expense, and, in some instances, the rarity of the books in which it is contained.

To place some of this information, in an attractive form, within the reach of those who cannot afford to purchase expensive books, is the principal object of this Miscellany.

Truth is stranger than fiction, but fiction is a valuable assistant in the development of truth. Both, therefore, shall be used in these volumes. Care will be taken to insure, as far as is possible, that the *facts* stated shall be true, and that the *impressions* given shall be truthful.

As all classes, in every age, have proved that tales and stories are the most popular style of literature, each volume of the series (with, perhaps, one or two exceptions) will contain a complete tale, the heroes and actors in which, together with the combination of circumstances in which they move, shall be more or less fictitious.

In writing these volumes, the author has earnestly endeavoured to keep in view the glory of God and the good of man.

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WRECKED BUT NOT RUINED.

CHAPTER I.

THE OUTPOST.

ON the northern shores of the Gulf of St. Lawrence there stood, not very long ago, a group of wooden houses, which were simple in construction and lowly in aspect. The region around them was a vast uncultivated uninhabited solitude. The road that led to them was a rude one. It wound round a rugged cliff, under the shelter of which the houses nestled as if for protection from the cold winds and the snow-drifts that took special delight in revelling there.

This group of buildings was, at the time we write of, an outpost of the fur-traders, those hardy pioneers of civilisation, to whom, chiefly, we are indebted for opening up the way into the northern wilderness of America. The outpost was named The Cliff, after the bold precipice near the base of which it stood. A slender stockade surrounded it, a flag-staff rose

in the centre of it, and a rusty old ship's-carronade reared defiantly at its front gate. In virtue of these warlike appendages the place was sometimes styled "the Fort."

When first established, the Cliff Fort lay far beyond the outmost bounds of civilized life, but the progress of emigration had sent forward wave after wave into the northern wilderness, and the tide rose at last until its distant murmur began to jar on the ears of the traders in their lonely dwelling; warning them that competition was at hand, and that, if they desired to carry on the trade in peace, they must push still further into the bush, or be hopelessly swallowed up in the advancing tide.

When the unwelcome sounds of advancing civilisation first broke the stillness of this desolate region, the chief of the trading-post was seated at breakfast with his clerk. He was a tall, good-looking, young Englishman, named Reginald Redding. The clerk, Bob Smart, was a sturdy youth, who first saw the light among the mountains of Scotland. Doubtless he had been named Robert when baptized, but his intimates would not have understood you had you mentioned him by that name.

Bob had just helped Reginald to the wing of a salt goose, and was about to treat himself to a leg of the same when the cook entered.

This cook was a man. It may also be said

with truth that he was more than most men. At the outpost men were few, and of women there were none. It may be imagined, then, that the cook's occupations and duties were numerous. François Le Rue, besides being cook to the establishment, was waiter, chamber-maid, firewood-chopper, butcher, baker, drawer-of-water, trader, fur-packer, and interpreter. These offices he held professionally. When "off duty," and luxuriating in tobacco and relaxation, he occupied himself as an amateur shoemaker, tailor, musician, and stick-whittler, to the no small advantage of himself and his fellow-outcasts, of whom there were five or six, besides the principals already mentioned.

Le Rue's face bore an expression of dissatisfaction and perplexity as he entered the hall.

"Oh, Monsieur Redding," he exclaimed, "dem squatters, de black scoundrils what is be called Macklodds has bin come at last."

"Ho ho! the M'Leods have come, have they?" said Redding, laying down his knife and fork, and looking earnestly at the man, "I had heard of their intention."

"Oui, yis, vraiment," said Le Rue, with vehemence, "dey has come to Jenkins Creek more dan tree veeks pass. Von sauvage come an' tell me he have see dem. Got put up von hut, an' have begin de saw-mill."

"Well, well, François," returned Redding,

with a somewhat doubtful smile, as he resumed his knife and fork, "bring some more hot water, and keep your mind easy. The M'Leods can't do us much harm. Their saw-mill will work for many a day before it makes much impression on the forests hereabouts. There is room for us all."

"Forests"! exclaimed the cook, with a frown and a shrug of his shoulders, "non, dey not hurt moche timber, but dey vill trade vid de Injins—de sauvages—an' give dem drink, an' git all de furs, an' fat den vill com of dat?"

Without waiting for a reply the indignant cook went in quest of hot water, leaving the traders to discuss the salt goose and the news.

"That 's bad news," said Bob Smart. "What do you propose to do in the circumstances?"

"Something definite must be done," replied Redding, "but I don't yet see my way as to what."

Having finished the goose between them, and turned its skeleton over with an inquisitive glance to make sure that nothing eatable had escaped, the two friends finished their frugal meal with a cup of tea and a fried cake of the simplest elements—flour and water—after which they drew their chairs to the fireplace,—a large open chimney well filled with blazing logs,—lighted their pipes, and entered on a

discussion of the M'Leods and their present position.

When their pipes were emptied, Redding arose, and, turning his back to the fire, said:—

"Well, Bob Smart, this is the outcome of our cogitations. I am almost certain that these M'Leods have taken up their quarters within the boundary of our Company's reserve lands, and if so, they must be routed out of their nest at once. Delay in such matters is often fatal. The law of use and wont, Bob, is soon established; but I have a strong objection to act in uncertainty. I will therefore drive up to the hut of Jonas Bellew, with whom I shall leave horse and sleigh as the track ends at Boulder Creek, and proceed on snow-shoes to the new settlement in Partridge Bay, where the surveyor lives, who has the plans of our reserve lands. I shall examine these plans, and if I find that our property has been invaded, then—"

"Death and confusion to the M'Leods," interrupted Bob. "Well, perhaps that is the best thing to do; but the spring is well advanced. The thermometer stood high this morning. If a thaw should set in, you will find the walking in snow-shoes bad."

"'If' is a word to which you attach too much importance, Bob. We have not at present to do with what may be, but with what is."

"True, nevertheless a prudent man has re-

gard to probabilities," replied Rob, with an air of much wisdom, as he relighted his pipe.

"Just so," returned Redding, "and as there is every probability that I shall be absent a good many days, I leave you in charge of this establishment, with strict injunctions to keep aloof from the M'Leods, and at the same time to keep an eye on them. François Le Rue will accompany me. I shall start immediately, therefore be pleased to go and tell Le Rue to get himself and the sleigh ready while I put on my travelling gear."

Obedient to the order, Smart left the room, while his superior clothed himself in a leathern coat and leggings, fur cap, moccasins and mittens.

In half an hour Redding and his man stepped into a sleigh, which was barely large enough to hold them. They packed themselves up to the armpits in bearskin rugs, and then Redding gave his rough little nag a touch of the whip, which caused him to start forward with a jerk that set all the bells on his harness ringing merrily. Another minute and they dashed out at the gate, swept round the base of the beetling cliff that frowned above the outpost, and entered the sombre shadow of the forest.

CHAPTER II.

THE RECLUSE OF BOULDER CREEK.

THE road along which the travellers proceeded was desolate and dreary in the extreme. Already darkened by clouds and snowdrift, it was rendered still more gloomy by overhanging and snow-laden branches of stunted pines. It was just broad enough to permit the passage of a single vehicle, being a mere woodman's track, which had been extended beyond the ordinary limits of such tracks, for his personal convenience by Jonas Bellew, a trapper who dwelt at that part of the coast already mentioned as Boulder Creek. The track followed the windings of a streamlet which was at that time covered with snow, and only distinguishable by the absence of bushes along its course. It turned now to the right, now to the left, as rocks, or mounds, or cliffs presented obstacles. In some places it dived precipitately into a hollow that necessitated careful driving; in others it ran straight up to the brow of a hill at an angle that obliged the travellers not only to get out

and walk, but also to aid their panting pony by putting their shoulders to the back of the sleigh. Here and there a level patch occurred over which they trotted briskly, and then down they went again by a steep incline into the bed of an ice-buried stream, to find a similarly steep ascent on the other side. Occasionally, coming to a wall-like cliff surrounded by a tangled and trackless forest, they were forced to seek the shores of the sea, and there, among rocks and ice-drift, pick their way slowly along.

Fortunately this road, just opposite to Jenkins Creek, where the M'Leods had commenced their squatting operations, ran along the shore at some distance from the entrance to the creek, so that Redding could pass without encountering the new comers, whom he was anxious to avoid until the question of the invasion of the Fur Company's rights was settled.

Despite their utmost efforts, night began to close upon the travellers before they reached Bellew's shanty in Boulder Creek.

"Take care, Monsieur, there is von portion dangereux here," said François Le Rue.

"Where?" asked Redding, as he checked the pony a little and looked earnestly ahead.

"Ah! dere!" exclaimed Le Rue.

His remark was needless, for at that moment the sleigh turned over a ledge of rock and pitched its occupants into a snow-drift.

"Killded?" gasped the Canadian, as he emerged from the snow with eyes, ears, and nostrils stuffed full; "no—not quite!"

Satisfying himself that no bones were broken, he turned abruptly to look for his companion, whose motionless legs sticking out of the drift were the only visible portions of his body.

Anxiously and swiftly did François drag his master out, and great was his relief when poor Redding looked at him with a bewildered gaze and demanded to know what had happened!

"Oh! I see, capsized," he said, rising and pressing his hand to his brow, "I believe I must have hit my head against a stump, for I've been slightly stunned. However, 'all's well that ends well.' Not hurt, François?"

"No, Monsieur,—not fatever."

"That's right, lend a hand to lift the sleigh —hoop! there—jump in."

Le Rue obeyed. The bear-rug was replaced around them, and the pony, which had stood as quiet as a lamb during the accident, started forward again.

"Voilà! von light," exclaimed the Canadian.

At that moment they had rounded the corner of a high cliff, and come into view of Boulder Creek. There was just light enough to make the chaotic grandeur of the place visible in a ghostly degree. Great boulders and masses of rock, which had fallen from the neighbouring

mountains and cliffs, lay piled about in the creek or gully in wildest confusion. Some of these masses were as large as a small hut, but they were of all sizes as well as shapes. It was a weird scene, and forbidding; nevertheless some human being had seen fit to take up his abode there, as was made apparent by the light referred to by Le Rue.

Picking their way carefully among the boulders, the travellers at last reached a log-hut which was so small, weather-worn, and grey, that, from a short distance, it might have easily been mistaken, even in daylight, for one of the rocks by which it was surrounded.

The door stood wide open, and through it streamed the light of a roaring fire of wood. So powerful was the contrast between the ruddy light and the cold grey scene without, that to the approaching travellers it appeared as if the whole interior of the hut glowed with fervent heat.

In the small doorway stood the figure of a man who was so large as almost to fill up the entrance, and so black, by contrast with the glowing back-ground, that neither feature nor form was distinguishable save his sharp outline. The outline, however, was a remarkably telling one. It told of a broad chest and square shoulders, of massive limbs, and an easy air, and a sturdy attitude, and suggested difficulty in

the way of entering that hut without leave asked and obtained.

"Hallo!" exclaimed the outline, in a voice so deep that it must have been unfathomable.

"How d'ee do, Bellew?" cried Reginald Redding, as he drove into the stream of light, pulled up, and sprang from the sleigh.

"Hearty, sir, hearty, thank 'ee," replied the outline, advancing and becoming a little more visible on the surface as he did so. "Hallo! Le Rue, how are 'ee? Glad to see you both. Step in. A good fire on a coldish night is cheery—ain't it, Mister Redding?"

"Indeed it is, Bellew, especially when the night happens to be also darkish."

"Ha! oui," interposed Le Rue, bustling into the hut with the bear-rug, "it vas so darkish dat ve copsize under de cliff an' a'most knock de whole affair to smattoms—sleigh, cheval, an' peepil."

"I'm glad to see that the 'peepil' is all right however," said Bellew, glancing at his visitors with what may be called a grave smile; "it might have bin worse, for that's an ugly corner under the cliff, an' needs careful drivin' even in daylight."

I've not come off quite scatheless, however," said Redding, rubbing the top of his head tenderly, "for here is a bump that would perplex the whole college of phrenologists."

"Skin broke, sir?" asked Bellew, advancing and examining the part. "No, all right. A good supper will be the best cure for it. If I was a phrenologist now, I'd name it the bump of top-heaviness. Sit down, sir; sit down, Le Rue, an' look after my kettle while I see to your nag."

So saying, their host went out and left his unexpected, but evidently welcome, guests to make themselves comfortable.

Although Jonas Bellew was a recluse, he was by no means an ascetic. He was marked by deep gravity of countenance coupled with a kindly humorous disposition. No one knew where he came from or why he had taken up his abode in such a lonely spot. Many of the rough fellows who hang on the outskirts of the wilderness had tried, as they said, to "pump" him on these points, but Jonas was either a dry well or a deep one, for pumping brought forth nothing. He gained a livelihood by shooting, fishing, trapping wild animals for their skins, and, sometimes, by doing what he called "odd jobs" in the settlements.

"Your home appears to me to grow wilder every time I see it," said Redding, as Bellew re-entered the hut, and busied himself in spreading on a rough deal table the materials of a plain but substantial meal.

"That seems to be the idea of most men

who come here," replied the trapper, "but it 's not many that favour me with a visit."

"Ha! vraiment, dat must be true," interposed the Canadian, "for no body vill com here 'xcept them as do want hims legs broke."

"Well, I have seen a few damaged shins and broken heads since I came to this location," said Jonas, "but such accidents occur chiefly among the Canadian French, who seem on the whole to be a clumsy set."

"Not von half so clumsy as de Engleesh, or Irish, or Scosh," retorted Le Rue.

"Perhaps you 're right, an' mayhap you 're wrong, lad, anyway here is supper. The Frenchmen are always good at their victuals, so sit in an' go to work. Take the keg, Mister Redding. I 've not found time yet to make chairs, but it 's wonderful how well a man gets along without such luxuries."

"Especially when a man sits down to a venison-steak like this," said the fur-trader, taking the offered seat, while his man sat down on a block of wood set on end, and prepared to prove the truth of the trapper's assertion in regard to French capacity for food.

"'Taint venison," said Bellew, assisting his companions to the meat in question, "it 's bear."

"Indeed! and not bad food for a hungry man," returned Redding, as he began supper. "Where got you him?"

"Down near Jenkins Creek, where the M'Leods are setting up their saw-mill."

"The M'Leods!" exclaimed Redding, looking up suddenly, "have you seen the M'Leods?"

"Ay, I've bin helpin' them a bit wi' the mill. Goin' down again to-morrow. If this weather holds, the ice must give way soon, and then we 'll be able to push ahead faster."

The trapper said this quietly and without looking up from the bear-steak with which he was busy, so that Redding's look of surprise appeared to be lost on him. The fur-trader and his man exchanged glances.

For a few minutes the process of mastication completely engrossed the trio, but the thoughts of the fur-trader were busy, for he was disappointed to find that one whom he respected so much as Jonas Bellew should thus coolly state that he was aiding the interlopers.

Presently he laid down his knife and fork, and said:—

"Are you aware, Bellew, that these M'Leods have settled themselves on the Company's reserve lands?"

"No, sir, I wasn't aware of it."

"Well, then, I now tell you that they have," said Redding, who, unfortunately for himself and others, possessed an easily-roused spirit and was apt to become irascible when the rights—

real or supposed—of the Company which he represented appeared in danger of violation. "At least," he continued, in a less positive tone, "I have reason to believe that such is the case, and I am now on my way to—"

He paused abruptly, feeling the impropriety of revealing his plans to one who, although a quiet and sensible man, and not given to talk too much, was, nevertheless, by his own admission, an aider and abettor of the enemy.

"Whereabouts is the boundary line?" asked Bellew, after a short silence.

"At Jenkins Creek—*that* creek is the boundary," answered the fur-trader. "On which side of the creek have they begun to build the mill?"

"They haven't begun yet, sir, but I believe they intend to commence on the south side."

"So far well," replied Redding, "but if I find that they have raised a stone or planted a stake on the *north* side of the creek, I'll—"

Here feeling that he was about to give way to a boastful spirit, he got himself out of the difficulty of having to finish the sentence by making a sudden and somewhat stern demand for "more bear-steak."

"Vid pleasieur, Monsieur," said Le Rue, placing a huge slice on his master's plate.

"Well, sir, I hope you'll find that they haven't overstepped the boundary," said Bellew.

"because the M'Leods look as if they'd be troublesome customers to deal with."

The fur-trader made no reply. He felt indignant at the bare idea of his being checked in doing his duty by any man, or men, who were "troublesome," by which expression he understood Bellew to mean that they were resolute and physically powerful in opposition; he therefore thought it best to avoid any further tendency to boast by holding his tongue.

Not so his volatile retainer, who stuck his fork into a lump of meat vindictively, as if it had been the body of a M'Leod, and exclaimed:—

"Hah! vat you say? troblesom, eh? who care for dat? If de Macklodds do touche, by von small hinch, de lands of de Companie—ve vill—hah!"

Another stab of the fork was all that the savage Le Rue vouchsafed as an explanation of his intentions.

In this frame of mind Reginald Redding and his man started off next morning on foot at an early hour, slept that night at a place called Sam's hut, and, the following evening, drew near to the end of their journey.

CHAPTER III.

A BRIEF BUT AGREEABLE MEETING.

THE little outskirt settlement of Partridge Bay was one of those infant colonies which was destined to become in future years a flourishing and thickly-peopled district of Canada. At the period of our story it was a mere cluster of dwellings that were little better than shanties in point of architecture and appearance. They were, however, somewhat larger than these, and the cleared fields around them, with here and there a little garden railed in, gave them a more home-like aspect than the dwellings of the woodmen.

The valley in which the settlement stood was one of those magnificent stretches of primeval forest which used to be the hunting-grounds of the red man, and from which he had not at that time been thrust by the "pale-face," for, here and there, his wigwam might still be seen sending its wreath of blue smoke above the tree-tops.

It was evening—a calm, sunny, glorious,

spring evening—when Redding and his man overtopped the heights that enclosed the vale, and paused as well to gaze upon the scene as to recover breath. Far below them lay the hamlet, a cluster of black dots on a field of pure snow. Roseate lights on undulations, and cold blue shadows in hollows, were tamed down in effect by the windows of the hamlet which shot forth beams of blazing fire at the setting sun. Illimitable space seemed to stretch away to the place where the horizon would have been if it had not lost itself in a golden glory and this vast reach was a varied irregular network of dark pines and fields of snow —the pines tipped everywhere with sparkling snow wreaths, the fields streaked everywhere with long shadows. Little winding lines of a grey colour which radiated from the hamlet indicated the tracks where the settlers drove their sleighs and wood-sledges. Many of these were seen moving along the far-off tracks like insects, while the tinkle of the sleigh-bells floated upwards like fairy music.

"Yes, I shall take up my abode there," murmured Redding, as he gazed in rapt admiration on the beautiful scene.

"Monsieur?" said his companion.

"I say that I should like to dwell there," answered Redding. "It is a splendid country and will be better known in days to come."

"Vraiment, truly, a magnifircent kontry," returned Le Rue, "gorgeows, magnifique! I vould giv moche, ver moche, to have leetil cottage, an vife, an cow, an pigs dere."

As Redding had been thinking of something similar, he laughed, and commenced the descent of the zigzag track that led to the hamlet.

They had proceeded only a few yards when, turning round a cluster of pines, they suddenly discovered some travellers in difficulty—a man whose horse had shied or stumbled off the narrow track and was embedded up to the girths in the soft snow, and two females, whose furry garments, all besprinkled with snow, showed that they had just emerged from the sledge which lay on its side behind the horse. The driver's chief anxiety seemed to be to quiet and restrain his horse, which, being high-spirited, was plunging in vain and frantic efforts to extricate himself, to the great danger of shafts and harness.

To run up and aid the man was of course the instant impulse of our travellers.

"Ah! good luck to 'ee," exclaimed the driver, in tones that were unmistakeably Irish, "here, howld 'is head till I git the sled clear."

"All right," cried the Englishman, seizing the reins near the mouth of the terrified animal and holding its head forcibly down, while Le Rue assisted the owner to unharness.

In a few minutes the vehicle was righted, and the horse released.

While the driver was busy readjusting the harness, he accompanied the operation with a running fire of grateful expressions, such as—"there now, aint ye in luck, Rooney? Arrah! gentlemen, it's my blissin' I bestow on yez. Och! but I'd have bin lost intirely widout ye. Well well, it's always the way. I'm no sooner in a scrape than I'm sure to git out of it. It's meself is a favoured man. Now thin, ladies, git in, for we're late enough on the road."

On the two "ladies" thus addressed Redding and his man had been gazing in silent surprise, for they were so good-looking and so blooming, that it seemed to the two men, who had been accustomed of late to the sight of none but the brown dames of the red skins, as if a couple of beings from another and a purer world had dropped suddenly upon their path. One of the two was evidently a lady, and was possessed of no common share of beauty. Her dark hair contrasted powerfully with the fairness of her skin and the whiteness of her teeth. Her dazzling black eyes almost, and her red lips altogether, laughed as she observed Redding's gaze of astonishment. Her companion, a very pretty Canadian girl, was evidently her maid.

"We owe you many thanks, kind sirs," said the lady, "for your opportune assistance."

"Pardon me, madam," said Redding, hastening forward in some confusion as he recovered from his rather rude stare of surprise, "I dwell in the wilderness and have been so unaccustomed of late to the sight of ladies that—that —allow me to assist you into the sleigh!"

"Madmoiselle, permettez moi," said Le Rue, advancing to the waiting-maid and politely offering his hand.

Another moment and the "ladies" were seated in the vehicle and carefully repacked by our travellers, while their Irish driver mounted to his seat in front and gathered up the reins.

"Thanks, gentlemen, many thanks," repeated the ladies, with bewitching smiles.

"Good luck to 'ee both," cried the driver, as he flourished his whip and drove away.

Redding and his man stood silently gazing for several minutes at the turn in the road where the vision had vanished.

"Heavin for two minits, an' now—gone for evair!" said Le Rue, with a deep sigh.

Redding echoed the sigh, and then laughed at the lugubrious expression of his man's face.

"Oh *such* eyes!" exclaimed Le Rue.

"Yes, she's rather good-looking," replied Redding, thinking of the lady.

"Good-looking! non—bootifool—exiquitely bootifool," cried Le Rue, thinking of the maid.

Again Redding laughed. "Well well, Fran-

çois," said he, "whether good-looking or beautiful matters little, for it's not likely that we shall ever see them again, so the less you think about them the better—Allons! we are late enough and must not loiter."

They pushed ahead at once at a rapid pace, but although neither spoke, each thought with somewhat similar feelings of the little incident just described.

Lest the reader should be surprised at so small a matter affecting them so deeply, we must remark that these fur-traders had lived for some years in a region where they saw no females except the brown and rather dirty squaws of the Indians who visited the Cliff Fort with furs. Their fort was indeed only three days' journey from the little settlement of Partridge Bay, but as the space which lay between was a particularly rugged part of the wilderness, with only a portion of road—unworthy of the name—here and there, and the greater part of the way only passable on foot or by means of dog-sledges, none but an occasional red man or a trapper went to and fro; and as the nature of the fur-trader's business called for very little intercourse with the settlements—their furs being sent by water to Quebec in summer—it followed that the inhabitants of the Cliff Fort rarely visited Partridge Bay. The sudden vision, therefore, of two

pretty females of a higher type had not only the effect on Redding and his man of novelty, but also stirred up old memories and associations.

Such good use did they now make of their time that the settlement of Partridge Bay was reached before dark, and our hero went off immediately in quest of the surveyor.

Mr. Gambart was a cheerful, healthy, plump little man, with a plump little wife, and three plump little daughters. Plumpness was not only a characteristic of the Gambarts, but also of their surroundings, for the cottage in which they dwelt had a certain air of plumpness about it, and the spot on which it stood was a round little knob of a hill.

Here Reginald Redding was hospitably received—we might almost say joyfully, because visitors to the settlement were so rare that whoever made his appearance was sure to be received as a "welcome guest" if he only carried the credentials of honesty and ordinary good nature on his countenance.

Redding's impatience, however, to get at the truth of the matter that had brought him there induced him very soon to forsake the society of the three plump little daughters and retire to the plump little father's work-room.

"It is my opinion," said Mr. Gambart, as he carefully unfolded the plan, "that you may find the M'Leods have trespassed somewhat on

your reserves, for, if my memory serves me rightly, there is a small islet—as you see here—just in the centre of the creek, *half* of which belongs to you."

"I see it," said the fur-trader, earnestly gazing on the dot which represented the said island.

"Well," continued the surveyor, "that islet is a mere rock just above the waterfall, and I am of opinion that it would be almost impossible for any one to erect a mill there without encroaching to some extent on your half of it."

"Good," replied the fur-trader, "can you let me have a copy of the plan to-morrow?"

"To-night if you please. I have one by me."

"Then I'll be off by daybreak the day after to-morrow," said Redding, with much decision.

"Why such haste?" asked the surveyor, "the M'Leods are not likely to run away from you. I know them well, for they dwelt long in this settlement, and were ever regarded as men of firm purpose—quite immoveable indeed when once they had made up their minds on any point, so you'll be sure to find them at Jenkins Creek carrying out their plans, even though you should delay your return for a month. Come, make up your mind to stay with us at least a few days. It will do you as well as me good, and will send you back to banishment in a better frame of mind."

Redding, although strongly tempted by the

comforts of civilized life and the hospitality of his host—not to mention the attractions of the plump little daughters—sternly resolved not to swerve an inch from the path of what he believed to be his duty. He entertained a strong suspicion that these M'Leods had penetrated into the wilderness to the neighbourhood of the Cliff Fort, not so much for the purpose of cutting timber as for secret opposition in the fur-trade, of which the company he represented had for many years enjoyed almost a monopoly. His pride was touched, his spirit was fired. Perhaps the peaceful and secluded life he had led rendered this little opportunity of warfare more a pleasure than a pain to him. At all events the thing was not to be tolerated. The saw-mill, which the M'Leods had an undoubted right to erect on the unoccupied lands, was being planted on the very border of the Company's reserve lands, which they had purchased, and which were clearly laid down in plans. He would see to it that these interlopers did not trespass by an inch—no, not by an eighth of an inch—if *he* had power to prevent it! The fact that the M'Leods were said to be resolute men made him more determined to assert his rights. He therefore declined Mr. Gambart's invitation firmly.

"I will stay," said he, "only one day, to look out for a house, and then return."

"Look out for a house!" exclaimed the surveyor, in surprise, "what mean you? Do you think of settling down here?"

"Indeed I do," replied Redding, with a smile. "I have long been brooding over that subject. The fact is, Mr. Gambart, that I am tired of solitude. I am a sociable being, and find it hard to endure the society of only five or six men in a place where there are no women, no children, and no end of bears! I intend to leave the Fur Company's service,—indeed my resignation is already sent in,—purchase a small farm here, and get—"

"Get a wife, a horse, a dog, and a gun, and settle down to enjoy yourself, eh?" interrupted the surveyor.

"Well, I had not gone quite so much into details," answered Redding, with a laugh, "but you are right in so far as settling down goes. My only fear is that it won't be easy to find a place that will at once suit my fancy and my purse. The small sum of money left me by my father at his death two years ago will not purchase a very extensive place, but—"

"I know the very thing to suit you," interrupted the surveyor with emphasis, "a splendid little cottage—quite a mansion in miniature—with garden, fences, fields, out-houses, etc., all complete and going literally for an old song. Come, we 'll 'go visit it by

the pale moonlight' just now, return to have tea with the ladies, and to-morrow we'll go see it by daylight. It is close at hand, the name is Loch Dhu, and it has only one objection."

"What may that be?" asked Redding, much amused at the abrupt little man's energy.

"Won't tell you till you 've seen it; come."

Without more ado they sallied forth and walked along the snowy track that led to the cottage in question. A few minutes sufficed to bring them to it, and the first glance showed the fur-trader that his friend had not exaggerated the beauty of the place. The cottage, although small, was so elegant in form and so tastefully planned in every respect that it well deserved the title of a mansion in miniature. It stood on a rising ground which was crowned with trees; and the garden in front, the summer-house, the porch, the trellis-work fence, the creepers, the flower-beds—everything in fact, told that it had been laid out and planned by a refined mind.

Of course Redding had to call in the aid of his imagination a little, for at the moment when he first beheld it, the whole scene was robed in a mantle of snow. Close to the house, and in sight of the front windows, was a small lake or pond, by the side of which rose an abrupt precipice of about fifty feet in height. Beyond this, a little to the right, lay

the undulating fields of the settlement, dotted with clumps of trees and clusters of cottages.

"Most beautiful!" exclaimed the fur-trader, "but why named Loch Dhu, which, if I mistake not, is the Gaelic for Black Lake?"

"Because that little pond," answered the surveyor, "when freed from its wintry coat, looks dark and deep even at mid-day under the shadow of that beetling cliff."

"Truly, I like it well," said Redding, as he turned again to look at the cottage, "are you its architect?"

"I am," answered Mr. Gambart, "but a greater mind than mine guided my pencil in the process of its creation."

"Indeed! and what is the objection to it that you spoke of?"

"That," replied the surveyor, with a mysterious look, "I must, on second thoughts, decline to tell you."

"How, then, can you expect me to buy the place?" demanded Redding, in surprise.

"Why, because I, a disinterested friend, strongly recommend you to do so. You believe in me. Well, I tell you that there is no objection to the place but one, and that one won't prove to be an objection in the long-run, though it is one just now. The price is, as you know, ridiculously small, first, because the family who owned it have been compelled

by reverses of fortune to part with it, and are in urgent need of ready cash; and, secondly, because few people have yet found out the beauties of this paradise, which will one day become a very important district of Canada.

"Humph, well, I believe in your friendship, and to some extent in your wisdom, though I doubt your capacity to prophesy," said Redding. "However, if you won't tell me the objection, I must rest content. To-morrow we will look at it in daylight, and if I then see no objections to it myself, I'll buy it."

The morrow came. In the blaze of the orb of day Loch Dhu looked more beautiful than it did by moonlight. After a thorough examination of house and grounds, the fur-trader resolved to purchase it, and commissioned his plump little friend to carry out the transaction. Thereafter he and his man retraced their steps to the wilderness, still breathing unutterable things against the entire clan of M'Leod.

CHAPTER IV.

PIONEERING.

WE turn now to "the enemy"—the M'Leods. The father and his two sons sat in a rude shanty, on a bench and an empty keg, drinking tea out of tin cans. They were all stalwart, dark-haired, grave-visaged mountaineers of Scotland. Unitedly they would have measured at least eighteen feet of humanity. The only difference between the father and the sons was that a few silver hairs mingled with the black on the head of the former, and a rougher skin covered his countenance. In other respects he seemed but an elder brother.

"Ian," he said to his first-born, as he refilled his tin can with tea, "how many more timbers have you to prepare for the dam?"

"Six," replied the son, laconically.

"It seems to me," observed Kenneth, the second son, "that if the frost holds much longer we shall be thrown idle, for everything is ready now to begin the works."

"Idle we need not be," returned the father,

"as long as there is timber to fell in the forest. We must prepare logs to be sawn as well as the mill to saw them."

"I can't help thinking, father," said Ian, "that we did not act wisely in spending all the remainder of our cash in an order for goods from England. We should have waited to see how the mill paid before setting up a store. Besides, I have my doubts as to the wood-cutters or other people passing this out-o'-the-way spot in sufficient numbers to make a store pay for many a day to come, and even if they do, people coming up the coast will have the Fur Company's store at the Cliff Fort to go to for supplies."

"It's too late to think of these things now," retorted the elder M'Leod; "we have made the venture, and must go through with it. Our case shows the folly of taking the advice of a friend of whose wisdom one is not well assured. No doubt Gambart meant to do us a service, and fancied that he knew this coast well, but it is quite plain that he was mistaken, for I have no doubt now, from the situation of the place, that there will be little or no traffic here for a long time to come."

"So, then, we might as well have thrown the remnant of our wrecked fortunes into the sea," said Kenneth, gravely.

"Not quite," returned the father, with a

smile. "If we can only manage to hold on for a year or two, we shall be sure to succeed, for there can be no question that the tide of immigration is beginning to set in this direction, but it does not flow fast, and our great difficulty in the meantime will be the want of ready cash."

"Act in haste and repent at leisure," said Ian.

"One can scarcely be said to act in haste," retorted his father, "who is almost forced into a course of action. My chief mistake was in putting too much trust in Gambart."

"Well," said Kenneth, rising and stretching his huge frame as he placed a hatchet on his shoulder, "there's nothing like a good breakfast for giving a man heart to face difficulties. I'll away to work. What a pity that we may not raise some of our timbers on the other side of the creek, for it is admirably adapted to our purpose. Don't you think we might, father?"

"No," replied the elder M'Leod, "the other side belongs to the fur-traders, whose rights must be respected."

Ian and his father soon followed Kenneth to the scene of their labours.

The spot was a wild one, but in many respects it was well suited to the purpose for which these adventurers had chosen it. The coast line at Jenkins Creek was precipitous

Cliffs, crowned with pines, rose in some places perpendicularly from the shingly beach of the gulf, and elsewhere the ground was very rugged. The creek itself was a mere streamlet which ran a short course from the mountains of the interior, brawling down a wild gully of inconsiderable extent. Near its mouth was a cascade, divided by a small rock or islet. It was between this rock and the south shore that the M'Leods purposed to erect their dam when the ice should have cleared away, and here, in the meantime, the three men busied themselves in cutting and shaping the necessary timbers, and forming the rougher parts of the machinery of the mill.

They toiled steadily till noon, and then returned to their log-hut for dinner, which consisted of cold pork, hot tea, biscuit, and salt butter. They were still in the midst of this meal when the door opened and a man entered, carrying under his arm a pair of long snow-shoes, which he had just taken off.

"Glad to see you, Bellew, we had expected you earlier," said the elder M'Leod, rising and shaking hands with the trapper.

"I would have been earlier," replied Bellew, handing a letter to M'Leod, "but for a red-skin whom I met on the way, who delayed me somewhat. He tells me something about a wreck having been seen by some of his tribe a

good bit down the gulf, but what between the difficulty of makin' out his lingo and his stupidity, or unwillingness to communicate all he knew, I have found out very little about it. This only I feel pretty sure of, that a wreck must have occurred, and that, from something he said, there may perhaps be some poor fellows lying on the shore there."

"If so, they will surely perish in such weather," said M'Leod, "and the least we can do is to go and try to rescue them."

"No need for you to go," said the trapper, "I will go alone with a small supply of provisions, and see whether it be true. If I find any of 'em alive I can make them comfortable enough for a short time, and then return here for such help as may be required."

"You 'll start at once then?" asked M'Leod.

"Yes, at once."

"Here, have something to eat first," said Kenneth, pointing to the viands.

Jonas Bellew accepted the invitation. At once he sat down and ate in silence heartily while the elder M'Leod read the letter.

"Have you bad news?" asked Ian, as he watched his father's face.

"Not exactly bad, but it's disappointing This is from Gambart.—Listen.

"MY DEAR M'LEOD,—I have just heard that the flour-mill in this place which you were

so anxious to purchase has come unexpectedly into the market, owing to the sudden death of its owner. It is to be had cheap too—at a very much lower figure than you offered before leaving Partridge Bay. I strongly advise you to secure it without delay. This letter goes by Sam Smalls to Bellew the trapper, who will doubtless deliver it to you. You'd better send him straight back with your reply."

"Humph! good advice this time," said Ian when his father ceased to read, "if we could only take it. 'Tis hard to have every penny we possess locked up, with such a chance before us. Couldn't we borrow, in the meantime, from Gambart himself?"

"I will never purchase property with borrowed capital," replied the elder M'Leod.

"Well, it can't be helped," said Ian, consoling himself with another slice of cold pork.

"Now I'm ready to start," said Bellew, rising and wiping his mouth with the cuff of his capote.

In a few minutes the trapper, on snow-shoes, and with a pack of provisions on his back, was striding down the coast at a pace that soon left the Creek far behind him.

Three days after this incident the trio at Jenkins Creek were aroused, while sitting at their mid-day meal, by the tinkle of sleigh-bells. Their sitting-room window was filled

chiefly with parchment, but there was one square of it filled with glass. Through this, as from a loop-hole, the inmates could reconnoitre any one who approached their hut.

"Two dog-sleighs!" exclaimed Ian, turning from the loop-hole with a look of surprise.

"Flora and Elise!" cried Kenneth and his father, in the same breath, as they started up eagerly and hastened to the door.

They were right. Flora, jumping out of the furs of a vehicle which resembled a slipper-bath, and was drawn by four panting dogs, ran into the hut, exclaiming, "Dear father," and threw her arms round the neck of the elder M'Leod, who was not slow to return the embrace. Elise entered with smiling face, and curtsied to the young men, who advanced and shook her heartily by the hand.

"Howld their hids, Mister Kenneth," exclaimed the driver of the foremost sleigh, as he sought to undo the traces of the dogs. "Sure they 're all alike—horses or dogs, they never *will* lay still when they 're wanted to; bad luck to 'em intirely. Me heart is all but broke. There—git along wid ye."

"Don't be hard on them, Rooney," said Kenneth, laughing, "they seem to have done good service."

"True for ye," replied Rooney, "it wouldn't have bin aisy to git the ladies down here wid-

out 'em, the snow was so soft wi' the thaw that it nigh tore the snow-shoes off me feet, an' my poor legs is at laist three inches longer than whin I set out, if not four."

"Well, Flo," said Ian, "although I know you to be a resolute girl, I didn't believe you would undertake a journey over a country without a road at such a season of the year."

"I *knew* she would come," said her father, patting the girl's head tenderly, "but didn't expect her quite so soon."

"That's just the reason why I came," said Flora, bustling about the room in search of a reasonably clean spot on which to deposit her fur cap and muff; "I wanted to take you by surprise, you dear old duck. Here, Elise, take these things and put them on a bed, or something of that sort, if there is one in the house. I declare there is not a spot in this room that is not covered with smoke and grease. How can you be so dirty? It is high time that Elise and I came to put your house in order. You needn't laugh, Kenneth, you ought to be ashamed of yourselves. This is dinner-time, I fancy. Have you any to spare for us? Let me see—but stay; first tell me how you have been and what you have done, and—"

"Please, Miss," said the maid, returning from a little side-room, "there isn't a spot

clean enough to put your things on. The beds are no better than the chairs and tables."

"Oh you dirty thing!" said Flora, seating herself on her father's knee, and gazing remonstratively into his face.

A quiet smile played on the dark visage of the elder M'Leod as he kissed her and said:—

"How could you expect us, Flo, to keep things very tidy in a place like this, where we 've had to work hard with our axes every day and all day, and no woman to help us in domestic affairs? Why, sometimes we 've been so tired at the end of a day, that instead of cleaning up, we have tumbled into bed, boots and all! But there *is* one little corner of our otherwise dirty hut which we have reserved for lady-visitors. See here!"

He rose, unlocked a little door in a corner of the dining-hall, and throwing it open, disclosed to the astonished gaze of his visitors a small apartment which was a perfect marvel of cleanliness and propriety. True, it was a very simple and what may be styled a home-made apartment. The walls, floor, and ceiling were of unpainted wood, but the wood was perfectly fresh, and smelt pleasantly of resin. The window was preposterously small, with only four squares of glass in it, and it was curtained with mere calico, but the calico was rose-coloured, which imparted a delightfully

warm glow to the room, and the view from the window of pine-woods and cliffs, and snow-fields, backed by the distant sea, was magnificent. Two little beds in the corner furthest from the window looked so snug that the tendency of beholders to lie down and go to sleep forthwith was only overcome by a sensation of fear lest the fairies, to whom they unquestionably belonged, might object. There was a rather clumsily-made chest of drawers in one corner, the workmanship of Kenneth; a book-shelf fashioned by Ian; and a table, with three chairs, made by M'Leod senior.

"Oh how kind of you," said Flora to her father, when she afterwards sat with him alone in this boudoir, and looked round on everything with the deepest interest.

"Well, it was natural that I should get ready a comfortable place for my only flower."

"Your *only* flower," exclaimed Flora, "why, what do you call Ian, and Kenneth, and Roderick?"

"Not flowers, certainly," replied her father, pulling her down on his knee; they may be regarded as useful vegetables, if you will, but they are scarcely flowers that one likes to fondle."

"There, now, sir, you have fondled me enough at present, so tell me all about yourself and your doings."

"Tell me first, Flo, how it fared with you by the way."

"Oh, that is soon told. After you left me I remained with old Mrs. Crowder in peaceful serenity until Rooney came back from Quebec, and then I consulted with him as to the possibility of getting down here before the close of winter. Being an old nor'-wester, and an Irishman, he had his answer ready. 'Sure,' said he, 'there 's nothin' aisier. The masther bade me go down to Jenkins Creek wi' the things as soon as possible, which or'narily mains faster than yer able, so I meant to be off to-morrow be daybreak on fut, wid a sled behind me. But if your ladyship intinds to honor me wid yer company, this is how we cud do it. I 'll hire a sleigh an' drive ye down to Sam Small's hut. I know that Sam has got one or two sleds and teams of dogs, for, like myself, he 's an owld nor'-wester, an' likes to revive owld memories by takin' a trip now an' then in the owld fashion. There 's no road av coorse, but dogs aint like horses; they don't have no need of roads, so that don't matter. I 'll git owld Bogus, the Injin, to help. He an' I can bate the tracks wid our snow-shoes, and the dogs 'ill follow kindly, an' so we 'll all go down to the creek together.'"

"Well," continued Flora, "this plan was carried out at once. We started next day and

got on famously in the sledge. We had only one upset. It might have been an awkward one, for the horse was very restive when he got off the track into the deep snow, but fortunately, just at the time, up came two travellers, one of them *such* a handsome man! and they got us out of our difficulty."

"Were you in danger, my pet?" asked M'Leod.

"Not exactly in danger, except the danger of having to walk at night through the forest, and without snow-shoes."

"Hm! not such a small danger that as you seem to think, Flo," said M'Leod, gravely. "However, these gentlemen got you out of the scrape—well, go on."

"Well, on we went, came to Sam Small's hut, slept there, got two dog-sledges, slept at the hut of Jonas Bellew in Boulder Creek, whose door we were obliged to break open, for he wasn't at home—and, here we are."

"Well, my pet, here you are likely to remain for some time to come. It 's not exactly as fine a residence as you 've been accustomed to, but there are many worse."

"Worse," exclaimed Flora, "there couldn't be many better—in the circumstances. I regard it as a small palace. Dear father," she added, "don't let our reverses weigh so heavily on you. Think of your favourite saying, 'It 's

an ill wind that blows no good.' Perhaps good may be in the wind somewhere for us."

"Ay; and I'll think of one of *your* favourite sayings too, Flo, 'Every cloud has a silver lining.'"

"But I've got a better saying than that *now*, father," said Flora, with sudden earnestness, "the saying that dear mother was so fond of quoting from the Bible before she died: 'Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.' Oh, father, that word comforts me now, for I have gone to Jesus and have pleaded with Him His own promise that whatever we shall ask in His name God will give it to us."

"Bless you, Flo," said her father, tenderly, "and what did you ask for,—success in our new enterprise?"

"No, I asked for guidance in every step of it, for that is certain to lead to success."

"Do you feel sure of getting an answer to that prayer, Flo?" asked M'Leod, gazing at his daughter with a perplexed expression.

"Quite sure," replied Flo confidently, "because God, who cannot lie, has promised."

"Now, what will you say if we fail in this enterprise?" asked her father.

"That my prayer has been answered," replied Flo.

"What? if he guides us to failure will you count that an answer?"

"Yes, indeed I will. More than that, I will count our failure to be success, for whatever God leads us to *must* be success if we commit our ways to Him."

"That's a convenient doctrine," replied M'Leod, with a slight smile, as he called to remembrance several conversations he had had with infidels during his travels, "and no one will ever be able to refute you, for, whatever betide, you will still be able to maintain, logically, that you have received an answer."

"Just so, father, and why not? Is not that convenient doctrine, as you call it, in accordance with the word of God Himself, who says that '*all* things work together for good to them that love Him'?"

"You have learned to talk like your dear mother, Flo," said M'Leod, rising; "we will continue this subject another time. At present I must away to work with the boys."

He left the room hastily, and his daughter, calling in the assistance of Elise, proceeded to arrange her little boudoir in a somewhat more sedate, though by no means less joyful, frame of mind than that in which she had made her entry into her new and unquestionably humble residence.

CHAPTER V.

THE "ENEMY."

MEANWHILE Reginald Redding — still breathing defiance to the clan of M'Leod, with his heart steeled against all softer influences, and with all his bristles erect—arrived at Jenkins Creek.

Seeing no one about the door of the hut, he passed it with an indignant frown, and proceeded direct to the cascade, where, from a considerable distance, he had observed the three settlers as they busily plied their axes.

A thaw had set in. The little cascade was beginning to roar ominously, almost savagely, behind the curtain of ice which had concealed almost the whole of it during winter. The ice on the edge of the St. Lawrence had already given way, and was being swept out to sea in variously-sized fields and masses. Everything gave indication that the reign of winter had come to an end, that the short-lived spring had laid its warm hand on the whole region, and that summer was not far

distant. Summer acts its part with promptitude in those regions.

Men out there are usually vigorous in taking advantage of the change; the M'Leods were making the most of their time when the fur-trader approached.

"It should be getting near supper-time," said the elder M'Leod, looking at the sun.

"Not far from it," said Kenneth, flinging down his axe and wiping the perspiration from his brow, as he glanced in the same direction, "what a comfort it is to have Flo to look after meals; it makes one feel—hallo! who come here?—see, two men, rounding the cliff just above the house."

The elder M'Leod made no reply, but waited until the strangers were sufficiently near to be addressed; then, touching his cap, he said, "Good-evening," heartily.

To this Reginald Redding replied, "Good evening," stiffly, while his man bestowed a gaze of unmistakable scorn all round.

A little surprised, but not much alarmed, by their manner, M'Leod said that it was an unusual pleasure to meet with strangers in such an out-of-the-way place; that he and his sons, having finished their day's work, were about to return to their hut for supper, and that he would be more than delighted if they would take "pot luck" with them.

Redding, who was by nature of a kindly sociable disposition, felt rather put out by this reception, especially when the invitation was pressed on him with much cordiality by Kenneth, as well as by Ian. Even the scorn on Le Rue's lip began to melt away like the snow! But the fur-trader felt that the interests of his employers were at stake; besides, had he not said to others, had he not vowed to himself, that he would not give way an inch —no, not so much as a hair's-breadth—to these long-legged interlopers, who, now that he beheld them, were evidently fur-traders in disguise,—men who made use of a so-called saw-mill as a mere blind to divert attention from the real object they had in view.

"Sir," said Redding, with quiet dignity, "I am the Fur Company's agent in this district, in charge of the Cliff Fort."

Had Redding been in charge of the Rock of Gibraltar, with its mighty armament of heavy guns, he could not have assumed an air of greater importance.

"I am glad to hear it," replied M'Leod, more and more perplexed by the youth's manner, "because I have been anxious for some days to consult you as to the exact boundary line of your Company's reserve."

"If you will accompany me to the creek," replied Redding, pointing to the islet on which

the M'Leods had already marked off a portion of rock and planted a couple of stakes, "I will enlighten you on that point."

"Willingly," answered M'Leod, preparing to follow with his two sons.

"Hah!" thought Redding as he drew near the spot and observed the stakes, "not a doubt of it; inches indeed; they have encroached feet—feet!—if not *yards* on our property."

He gave no audible sound, however, to his thoughts until the party had reached the islet, which was connected with the mainland by a plank, then he turned to M'Leod with the air of a man who has resolved to wage war to the knife for his rights. Le Rue, seeing his master in this mood, drew himself up, compressed his lips and darkened his frown.

"The line of demarcation," said Redding, slowly, but with much decision of tone and manner, "runs *exactly* down the centre of this stream and cuts *precisely* across the centre of this rock. Now, sir," he turned abruptly here to look his adversary full in the face. In doing so his vision, passing over the shoulder of his enemy, encountered the bright face and astonished gaze of Flora M'Leod, who had just come to let her father and brothers know that their evening meal awaited them.

Reginald Redding was struck dumb. Glancing round to see what had fascinated the gaze

of the fur-trader, M'Leod turned with a smile, and said :—

"My daughter Flora, Mister—ah!—I beg pardon—your name is, I think—"

"Redding," murmured the fur-trader, with hesitation, for he had begun to doubt his own identity.

"Just so. Flo has come to tell us, Mr. Redding, that supper is ready, so, if you will condescend to accept of our rough and ready hospitality, we shall be delighted. But, before going, pray let us finish this matter. You were about to say—"

"Oh, nothing,—nothing worth mentioning," said Redding, hurriedly, endeavouring to recover himself; "I merely—the fact is—that —a rock like this is so—so utterly insignificant that the idea of trespassing on it is quite absurd, quite out of—why, surely I *cannot* be mistaken," he added, lifting his cap, "this must be the young lady whom I had the pleasure of meeting on the road hither at a time when—"

"When your presence and aid were most opportune," interrupted Flora, as she held out her hand with a gracious smile and a blush.

Why Flora blushed is best known to herself. The same may be said in regard to the fact that Reginald Redding felt rather awkward—though not naturally an awkward man—and looked rather sheepish as he took the hand timidly.

It is also worthy of record that the touch of Flora's hand sent a galvanic stream up Redding's arm, which curled round his head, ran down his spine, and passed out into the rock at the extremities of his ten toes!

"Indeed!" exclaimed M'Leod senior, while a peculiar expression crossed his swarthy countenance as if a new idea had hit him; "then, Mr. Redding, I am your debtor; but come, let us to supper before it cools. I suppose that no more need be said about the boundary line. I have not been guilty of trespassing, it seems, on your Company's reserves?"

"Not in the least," answered the fur-trader, promptly, with a glance at his man.

"Vraiment, non, cer'nly not!" exclaimed Le Rue, emphatically, not a trace of scorn being now visible on his benign countenance.

Matters being thus amicably disposed of, the party adjourned to the hut, where they sat down to a substantial repast, the foundation of which was boiled bacon and tea; the superstructure biscuits and butter.

Here François Le Rue met with a profound disappointment. He had rightly judged that where the mistress dwelt the maid must necessarily abide; accordingly, on entering the hut he had the extreme satisfaction of obtaining a glance of grateful recognition from Elise's bright eyes. But the sanguine trader had also counted

on the pleasure of her company at supper in the kitchen of the establishment while his master should sup with the M'Leods in the parlour. In this he was mistaken. In such an out-of-the-way region the young Canadian girl was counted as much a companion as a servant, and while she performed the duties of attendant at the table in the hall, she also sat modestly down at the same table to partake of the evening meal. François, on the other hand, was told to go to the kitchen and make himself comfortable.

The kitchen was a little out-house, not unlike a gigantic dog-kennel, separated by a space of six feet or so from the principal dwelling.

Opening its door, Le Rue entered with a heavy heart, supposing that he should have to eat his supper in dreary solitude, "not dat I cares moch for dat," thought he, as he raised the latch, "for I's accootomed to solitairness; but ah! ven I tinks of—"

"Hooroo!" shouted a gruff voice, scattering at once his thoughts and his "solitairness."

Le Rue started as he encountered the surprised gaze of a man, but, being in a crusty humour, he only exclaimed—

"Hah!" and returned the gaze.

"Sure it 's you or yer ghost," exclaimed the identical driver whom the two fur-traders had so lately assisted out of difficulties. "Give us

yer fist, young man. Ah, then, it 's good luck is yer portion, Rooney. Didn't I think to sit down to me supper in solitood, whin in comes like a vision the frind as was a frind indade to me and the ladies the other day. Come in, come in, sit ye down there; an' ait till yer fit to bust. Och! but it 's mesilf is glad this night. There, putt off yer capote; if yer at all like me ye 'll not be fit to taste a morsel till yer in yer shirt sleeves. Howld—I 'll hang it on the peg for 'ee. Now thin, go to work. Don't spare it. Faix, there 's plinty more where that came from, though there ant much variety here. It 's pig for breakfast, pig for dinner, an' pig for supper—wid a slice o' cowld pig at odd times whin yer extra hungry. An' then ye 'll have to pig-in wid myself at night, for there's only wan bed in this coolinairy mansion, not bein' room to howld more! That 's yer sort—the tae 's hot, anyhow."

There was no withstanding such a welcome as this. François Le Rue thawed instantly, and thereafter warmed up to intense cordiality while he plied his knife and fork on the "pig," and quaffed the steaming "tae," talking between mouthfuls as his voluble friend gave him opportunity.

An abrupt check, however, was put to the pleasant flow of his spirits when Rooney, having occasion to refer to "the ladies," remarked

in an enthusiastic tone that Elise was "a angel —nothin' more nor less—only widout wings."

The demon jealousy instantly fired the soul of the Canadian.

"Vat you knows about she?" he demanded, with suppressed emotion.

"Knows about her!" exclaimed Rooney, with increased enthusiasm, while Le Rue's spirit dilated with increasing jealousy, "what do I *not* know about her, is the question. Sure I've knowed her iver since she was a purty little curly-hided child; I've knowed her goodness to her parients till the day of their death, an' her gentleness in the time of sorrow, an' her jollity in the time of joy, an' her faithfulness to her mistress in adversity, an' her gin'ral goodness at all times, blissin's on her!"

François ceased devouring "pig" and played with his knife while he mentally, almost unconsciously, measured the number of inches that lay between the outside of Rooney's chest and the core of his heart.

"You 'se verai fond of her, it seems," he said, with deep sarcasm.

"That's just what I am," replied Rooney, stuffing an enormous piece of bacon into his no less enormous mouth. "It 's raison I have too," he added, thickly but quite audibly, "for she nursed my poor wife through a long illness, an'

it's my belaif she wouldn't ha' bin alive this day but for the care and attintion she got from Elise."

The demon fled horrified out at the key-hole —the window being shut—and Le Rue, feeling the deepest regard for Rooney, relieved his feelings with a sigh and more "pig."

While the Irishman and Canadian were entertaining each other thus in the kitchen, the Highlanders and Englishman were no less cordial and busy in the hall. Rough and ready the hospitality indeed was, for the board was not only uncovered but unplaned, and the dishes were cracked and dinted—according to their nature; but the heartiness of the welcome, the solidity of the simple viands, the strength of appetite, and, above all, the presence of bright eyes and gentle spirits threw a luxurious halo round the humble apartment, in the light of which Reginald Redding revelled.

Tea,—the cup which cheers but does not inebriate,—was used at that board as if it had been brandy and water. The men not only drank it during the progress of the meal, but afterwards sat long over it, and dallied with it, and urged each other to "have some more" of it, and quaffed it to the health of absent friends, and told stories, and cut jokes, and sang songs over it, and replenished it with hot water to such an extent that it gradually changed its

nature and became that harmless beverage loved by Frenchmen, *eau sucre.*

That it cheered was evident, for laughter was often loud and sometimes long. That it did not inebriate was equally clear, for the talk of the party was frequently grave as well as gay.

It was especially grave when, towards the end of the evening, M'Leod senior, in answer to some allusion of his guest as to the beauties of Partridge Bay, became confidential, and told how he had once dwelt in that settlement for many years in a happy home which he had specially built for himself, or rather, as he said with a kindly glance at his pretty daughter, which he had built specially for his wife and child. How it had pleased God to take from him his dear partner before they had been long in the new house; how the failure of a friend had involved him in ruin and compelled him to sell off all he had possessed and begin life anew with the scanty remnants of his fortune; how he had taken the advice of another friend and come to Jenkins Creek to set up a saw-mill, having previously invested nearly all his funds in an order for goods from England for the purpose of setting up a general store, as it was highly probable the country would go on prospering and the demand for such a store become great; how he had had letters from

his youngest son, Roderick,—a lad of nineteen who had been educated in the "old country," —telling him that the goods had been bought and shipped in the *Betsy* of Plymouth, and how that he, Roderick, intended to take passage in the same ship the week following, and join his father and brothers in their new sphere of labour; how that, sometimes, he felt depressed by the sudden reverse of fortune, but was always cheered and raised up again by his daughter Flo, who had a wonderful way—somewhat like her mother—of inducing him, when things looked darkest, to turn his eyes to the source of all light, and comfort, and hope, and prosperity.

You may be sure that Reginald Redding listened to all this with the deepest interest and sympathy, for as he glanced at Flora's speaking countenance—and he did glance at it pretty frequently—he observed new beauty in her expression, and bright tear-drops in her eyes.

"Ah, Flo," said her father, when he had finished, "no one has such good cause to regret the loss of our old home as yourself, for I don't think Mr. Gambart could have planned it without your aid."

"What!" exclaimed Redding, with a look of sudden surprise, "what was the name of your place in Partridge Bay?"

"I gave it a Highland name," said M'Leod, with a sad smile, "after a place in Scotland that once belonged to my mother's family,—Loch Dhu."

For a moment or two the young fur-trader remained speechless. He looked first at Flora and then at her father, and after that at her brothers, without being able to make up his mind how to act. He now understood the reason of Gambart's silence as to the former owners of Loch Dhu, and he would have given worlds at that moment if he had never seen or heard of the place, for it seemed such a heartless position to be placed in—the fortunate owner of the lovely spot, over the loss of which Flora and her family evidently mourned so deeply. He could not bear the thought of having to reveal the truth; still less could he bear the thought of concealing it. He was therefore about to make the disagreeable confession, when the thoughts of the whole party were suddenly diverted to another channel, by the opening of the door and the entrance of one of those gaunt sons of the forest who were wont to hang on the skirts of civilisation, as it advanced to wrest from them their native wilderness.

The Indian stalked into the room, handed a dirty piece of folded paper to M'Leod, and sat down beside the fire, after the fashion of his race, in solemn silence.

CHAPTER VI.

OUT IN THE SNOW.

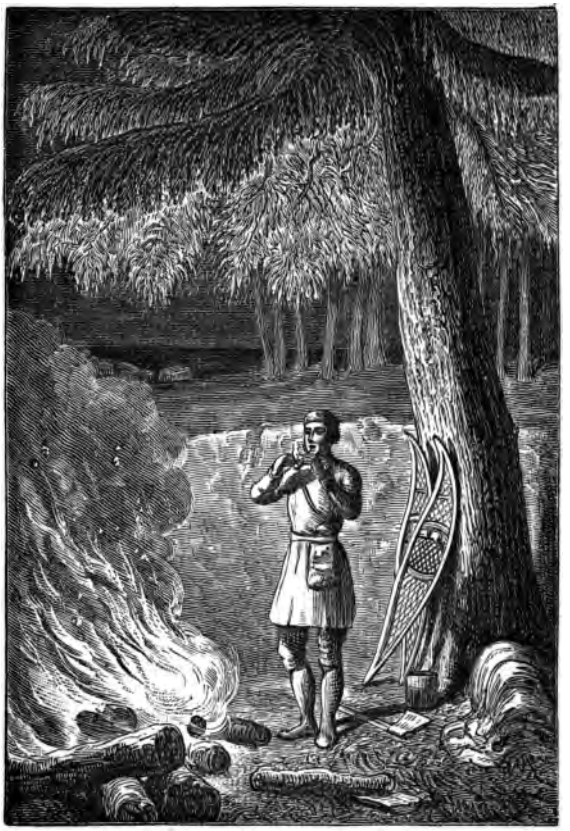
WHEN Jonas Bellew set off in search of the rumoured wreck, as related in a previous chapter, he passed the Cliff Fort without calling there, partly because he did not wish to waste time, and partly because he had no desire to hold converse at that time with Mr. Smart, who, he rightly suspected, must have shared in Redding's suspicions as to the intentions of the M'Leods.

Making a straight cut, therefore, across the bay in front of the fur-trading establishment, on ice that had not yet been floated away, he gained the land below the fort and continued his journey down the coast. That night he slept in the snow.

Let not the reader entertain the mistaken idea that such a sleeping-place was either cold, wet, or uncomfortable. It was the reverse of all that, being warm, dry, and cosey. The making of this bed we record here, for the benefit of housemaids and all whom it may concern.

First of all, the sturdy trapper walked along the coast, sometimes on snow-shoes when fields of snow-covered ice projected out to sea; at other times on foot, with the snow-shoes slung over his back, when long stretches of sand or shingly beach, from which the ice had been swept away, presented themselves. This process of progression he continued till night began to close upon him. Then he bethought him of encamping, and retired to the neighbouring woods for the purpose.

The woods referred to consisted chiefly of pines, which fringed the base of the precipitous hills by which that part of the gulf of St. Lawrence is bordered. Here he selected the largest tree he could find, and threw down his bundle of food and blankets under the flat spreading branches thereof. Resting one of his snow-shoes against the stem of the tree, he proceeded to dig a huge hole in the snow, using his other snow-shoe as a shovel. The operation cost him much labour, for he had to dig completely down to the ground, and the snow in the woods was still between three and four feet deep. When a hole of ten feet long by five broad was thus cleared to the bottom, the natural walls were raised by the snow thrown out, to a total height of about six feet. This was Bellew's bed-chamber. The spreading pine-branches overhead were its admirable



BELLEW ENCAMPING IN THE SNOW.

roof. Next, the trapper cut down a young pine, with the tender branches of which he covered the floor of his chamber to a depth of ten or twelve inches. This was his mattress, and a soft, warm, elastic one it was.* The head of the mattress rested against the stem of the pine tree, and a convenient root thereof served Bellew for a pillow. At the foot of the bed he had left the floor of his chamber uncovered; this was his fireplace, and in the course of ten minutes or so he cut down and chopped into billets enough of dry wood to fill it with materials for a splendid fire. These being arranged, with a core of dry moss and broken twigs in the centre, the patient man struck a light by means of flint, steel, and tinder, and applied it. While the first few tongues of fire were crackling in the core of moss, he spread a thick blanket on his bed, and then stood up leisurely to fill his pipe and dreamily to watch the kindling of the fire.

And this was a sight worth watching, for the change in the aspect of affairs was little short of miraculous. Before the flames shot forth, Jonas Bellew, looking over the edge of a black hole that was disagreeably suggestive of a tomb, could dimly perceive a stretch of cold, grey, ghostly forest, through the openings of

* As the writer of this narrative can testify from personal experience.

which hummocks of ice could be seen floating away over the black waters of the sea. The little starlight that prevailed only served to render darkness visible, and thus to increase the desolate aspect of the scene. But when the ruddy flames began to shoot forth and tip with a warm glow the nearest projections, they brought out in startling prominence the point of Bellew's nose and the bowl of his little pipe. Continuing to gain strength they seemed to weaken the force of distant objects in proportion as they intensified those that were near. The pale woods and dark waters outside deepened into invisible black, while the snow-walls of Bellew's chamber glowed as if on fire, and sparkled as if set with diamonds. The tree stem became a ruddy column, with Bellew's shadow lying black as ink against it, and the branches above became like a red-hot roof.

It may, perhaps, be supposed that the snow-walls melted under this ordeal; nothing of the sort. Their tendency to do so was checked effectually, not only by a sharp frost, but by the solid backing of snow behind them; and the little that did give way in close proximity to the fire ran unobtrusively down to the earth and crept away under the snow towards the sea, for Bellew had made his camp with the fire at its lower end, so that not a drop of

water could by any means reach the spot whereon he lay.

Having stuffed his little tin can or kettle with snow, he put this on the fire to melt, and then spread out his bacon and biscuit, and sugar and tea, all of which being in course of time prepared, he sat down to enjoy himself, and felt, as well as looked, supremely happy.

Then Jonas Bellew went on his knees and prayed—for he was one of those men who do not think it unmanly to remember the Giver of all that they enjoy—and thereafter he rolled himself in his blanket, pillowed his head on the tree-root, and sank into profound repose—such repose as is known only to healthy infants and hard-working men and women. Little by little the fire burnt low, the ruddy lights grew dim, the pale lights re-appeared, and the encampment resumed its tomb-like appearance until the break of another day gave it a new aspect and caused Jonas Bellew to rise, yawn, shake the hoar-frost from his blanket, pack up his traps, and resume his journey.

CHAPTER VII.

A SAD DISCOVERY.

A WRECK on a rocky shore is at all times a dreary sight, but especially so when the shore is that of an uninhabited land, and when the rocks as well as the wreck are fringed with snow-wreaths and cumbered with ice.

Some such thoughts probably filled the mind of the trapper when, on the afternoon of the day whose dawn we have mentioned, he stood beside the wreck of what had once been a full-rigged ship and gazed intently on the scene of desolation.

Life and death were powerfully suggested to him. Many a time had he seen such a craft breasting the waves of the broad St. Lawrence, when every dip of the bow, every bend of the taper masts, every rattle of the ropes, and every mellow shout of the seamen, told of vigorous life and energy; and now, the broken masts and yards tipped and fringed with snow-wreaths, the shattered stern, out of which the cargo had been evidently washed

long ago, the decks crushed down with snow, the bulged sides, the bottom pierced by rocks, the bowsprit burst to shivers by the opposing cliff, the pendant and motionless cordage, even the slight ripple of the sleeping sea, which deepened rather than broke the prevailing silence, all told eloquently of death,—death, perchance to passengers and crew, at all events to sanguine hopes and prospects. Nevertheless there was much life connected with that death-like scene, as the sequel of our tale will show.

The trapper, although fond of moralizing, was not prone to indulge in sentiment when circumstances called him to action. He had come suddenly in sight of the wreck on turning the point of the frowning cliff where the gallant ship had met her doom, and stood only for a few seconds to gaze sadly on the scene.

Hastening forward he proceeded at once to make a thorough survey of the vessel.

First he went to the stern to ascertain, if possible, her name. The greater part of the stern had, as we have said, been torn away; but, after careful search, he discovered a piece of wood on which he could plainly trace portions of the letters *B* and *e* and *t*. The remainder of the word, whatever it was, had been completely erased.

Bellew did not at first climb on board the ship, because from her general aspect he knew

full well that there could be no survivor in her, besides, through the yawning stern he could see nearly the whole of the interior.

His next step was to search the neighbourhood for tracks, in order to see whether or not the wreck had been lately visited by human beings. This search resulted in discoveries which perplexed him greatly, for not only did he find numerous footprints which crossed each other in various directions, but he knew from their appearance that these had been recently made, and that they were those of white men as well as red; some of them showing the prints of shoes, while others displayed the marks of moccasins.

Had Bellew discovered one or two tracks made by men of the forest like himself, his knowledge of wood-craft would have enabled him at once to decide which way they had come and whither they had gone; but, with at least a dozen meandering tracks radiating from the ship in all directions, as well towards the sea as the land, he felt himself puzzled. He knew well enough that they were too fresh to be those of the wrecked crew, unless indeed the crew had remained by the ship; but in that case there would have been evidences of an encampment of some sort, such as fittings-up on board, or huts on shore. He followed the tracks that led to the sea and found that

they terminated abruptly, as if those who had made them had plunged into the water and drowned themselves. Before following up those that went landward he returned to the ship and clambered on board, but found nothing to reward him for his pains. The sea had swept the hold fore and aft so completely that nothing whatever was left.

These investigations did not take up much time. The trapper, after one or two circuits, found the spot where the footsteps became disentangled from the maze of individual tracks, and led, not along the shore as he had supposed they would, but up into a narrow gorge; and now he learned that the tracks of what appeared a multitude of people had been made by the running to and fro of not more than a dozen men, six of whom were natives. Thinking it probable that the party could not be far distant, for the gorge up which they had proceeded seemed of very limited extent, the trapper pushed forward with increasing expectation, not unmingled with anxiety.

Turning the point of a projecting cliff he came suddenly on a sight that filled him with sadness. It was the mouldering remains of a human being—one who had been a seaman, to judge from the garments which covered him. One glance sufficed to show the trapper that his services there were not required He also

observed that the fresh tracks which he had been following circled round the body of the seaman and then led straight on.

Following these, Bellew soon came to an open circular space at the head of the gorge, where the appearance of smoke, rising from among the trees, arrested his attention. In a few minutes he had reached the spot whence it issued, and there to his susprise found Mr. Bob Smart with five of his men and several Indians standing in solemn silence round something on the ground that appeared to rivet their attention. Some of the men looked up as Bellew approached and nodded to him, for the trapper was well known in the district; they also moved aside and let him pass.

"What 's wrong, Mr. Smart?" he asked, on coming up.

The fur-trader pointed to the ground, on which lay a group of men, who, at a first glance, appeared to be dying. One in particular, a youth, seemed to be in the very last stage of exhaustion. Smart had just risen from his side after administering a cup of hot tea, when the trapper appeared.

"I fear he won't last long," said Smart, turning to Bellew, with a shake of his head.

"What have you been givin' him?" asked Bellew, stooping and feeling his pulse.

"Just a cup of tea," replied Smart; "I

have unfortunately nothing better. We only heard of the wreck yesterday, and came down in our boat in such haste that we forgot spirits. Besides, I counted on bringing whoever I should find up to the fort without delay, but although we may move most of these poor fellows, I doubt much that we daren't move *him.*"

This was said in a whisper, for the poor fellows referred to, although unable to rise, lay listening eagerly to every word that was spoken. There were six of then—one a negro —all terribly emaciated, and more or less badly frost-bitten. They formed the remnant of a crew of twenty-five, many of whom, after suffering dreadfully from hunger and frost-bites, had wandered away into the woods, and in a half delirious state, had perished.

"You have hot water, I see," said the trapper, hastily unfastening his pack, "fetch some."

Bob Smart promptly and gladly obeyed, for he saw that Bellew was a man of action, and appeared to know what to do.

"You 're right, Mr. Smart," said Bellew, as he poured a little of the contents of a bottle into the tin pannikin that had served him for a tea-cup the night before, "this poor lad couldn't stand moving just now. Fortunately I've brought some spirits with me. It will start fresh life in him if he 's not too far gone

already. Here, sir," he continued, in a louder tone, "let me put this to your lips."

The youth opened a pair of brilliant black eyes and gazed earnestly at the speaker, then smiled faintly and sipped the offered beverage.

As might have been expected, he at once revived a little under its influence.

"There, that's enough just now; it don't do to take much at a time. I'll give 'ee somethin' else in a minute," said Bellew, as he went from one to another and administered a teaspoonful or two to each.

They were very grateful, and said so in words more or less emphatic. One of them, indeed, who appeared to have once been a jovial seaman, intimated that he would be glad to take as many more teaspoonfuls of "that same" as Bellew chose to administer! but the trapper, paying no attention to the suggestion, proceeded to open his store of provisions and to concoct, in his tin tea-kettle, a species of thin soup. While this was simmering, he began to remove the blankets with which Bob Smart had covered the unfortunate men.

"Don't you think," said Bob, "that it would be well to leave their wraps alone till we get them up to the fort? They're badly bitten, and I know little about dressing sores. By the time we get there Mr. Redding will pro-

bably have returned from Partridge Bay, and he 's more than half a doctor, I believe."

"Nevertheless, I 'll have a look," said Bellew, with a smile, "for I 'm a bit of a doctor myself in such matters,—about a quarter of one, if I may say so."

Without further parley the trapper laid bare their sores, and truly the sad sight fully justified Smart's remark that the poor fellows were badly bitten. One of them, the seaman above referred to, whom his comrades styled Ned, had only lost the ends of one or two toes and the forefinger of his left hand, but some of the others had been so severely frost-bitten in their feet that all the toes were rotting off; the negro in particular had lost his left foot, while the heel-bone of the other was exposed to the extent of nearly an inch, and all the toes were gone.*

In perfect silence, but with a despatch that would have done credit to hospital training, the trapper removed the dead flesh, dressed the sores, applied poultices of certain herbs gathered in the woods, and bandaged them up. This done, he served out the thin soup, with another small allowance of spirits and hot water, after which, with the able assistance of Bob Smart and his men, he wrapped them up in

* We describe here, from memory, what we have actually seen.

their blankets and made arrangements for having them conveyed to the boat which had been pulled into a convenient creek further down the shore than the wreck.

Strange to say, the youth who appeared to be dying was the least injured by frost-bites of the party, his fingers and face being untouched and only a portion of the skin of his feet damaged; but this was explained by the seaman, Ned, who, on hearing Bellew's expression of surprise, said, with a touch of feeling :—

"It 's not the frost as damaged *him*, sir, it 's the water an' the rocks. W'en we was wrecked, sir,—now three weeks ago, or thereby,—we 'd ableeged to send a hawser ashore, an' not one of us could swim, from the cap'n to the cabin-boy, so Mister M'Leod he wolunteered to—"

"Mister who?" demanded Bellew, hastily.

"Mister M'Leod."

"What was your ship's name?"

"The *Betsy*, sir."

"From what port?"

"Plymouth."

"Ho ho! well, go on."

"Well, as I was a-sayin', sir, Mister M'Leod, who 's as bold as a lion, he wolunteered to swim ashore wi' a line, an' swim he did, though the sea was rollin' in on the cliffs like the Falls o' Niagery,—which I 'm told lie somewhere in these latitudes,—leastwise they 're putt down

in all the charts so. We tried for to dissuade him at first, but when the starn o' the ship was tore away, and the cargo began to wash out, we all saw that it was neck or nothin', so we let him go. For a time he swam like a good un, but when he 'd bin dashed agin' the cliffs two or three times an' washed back again among the wreck of spars, cargo, and riggin', we thought it was all over with all of us. Hows'ever we wasn't forsooken at the eleventh hour, for a wave all of a sudden washed him high and dry on a ledge of rock, an' he stood up and waved his hand and then fell down in a swound. Then we thought again it was all up with us, for every wave went roarin' up to young Mister M'Leod as if it wor mad to lose him, and one or two of 'em even sent the foam washin' in about his legs. Well, sir, the last one that did that seemed to bring him to, for as it washed over his face he jumped up and held on to the rocks like a limpet. Then he got a little higher on the cliff and when we saw he was lookin' out to us we made signs to him that a hawser was made fast to the line, an' all ready. He understood us an' began to haul away on the line, but we could see that he had bin badly hurt from the way he stopped from time to time to git breath, and rested his head on a big rock that rose at his side like a great capstan.

Hows'ever, he got the hawser ashore at last, an' made it fast round the big rock, an' so by means of that, an' the blessin' o' Providence, we all got ashore. Pr'aps," added Ned, thoughtfully, "it might have bin as well if some of us hadn't—hows'ever, we wasn't to know that at the time, you understand, sir."

It must not be supposed that Ned said all this in the hearty tones that were peculiar to his former self. The poor fellow could only utter it sentence by sentence in a weak voice, which was strengthened occasionally by a sip from "that same" beverage which had first awakened his admiration. Meanwhile the object of his remarks had fallen asleep.

"Now, Mister Smart," said Bellew, taking the fur-trader aside, "from all that I have heard and seen it is clear to me that this wreck is the vessel in which the M'Leods of Jenkins Creek had shipped their property from England, and that this youth is Roderick, the youngest son of the family. I 've bin helping the M'Leods of late with their noo sawmill, and I've heard the father talking sometimes with his sons about the *Betsy* of Plymouth and their brother Roderick."

At another time Bob Smart would not have been at all sorry to hear that the interloping M'Leods had lost all their property, but now he was filled with pity, and asked Jonas Bellew

with much anxiety what he thought was best to be done.

"The best thing to do," said Bellew, is to carry these men to the boat and have them up to the Cliff Fort without delay."

"We'll set about it at once. You'll go with us, I suppose."

"No, I'll remain behind and take care of young M'Leod. In his present state it would likely cost him his life to move him."

"Then I'll leave some of my men with you."

"Not needful," replied the trapper, "you know I'm used to bein' alone an' managin' things for myself. After you get them up you may send down a couple of men with some provisions and their hatchets. For to-night I can make the poor fellow all snug with the tarpaulin of your boat."

In accordance with these plans the shipwrecked men were sent up to the Cliff Fort. Roderick M'Leod was sheltered under a tarpaulin tent and carefully tended by Bellew, and one of Smart's most active Indians was despatched with a pencil-note to Jenkins Creek.

It was this note which interrupted the conversation between Reginald Redding and the elder M'Leod at a somewhat critical moment, and this note, as the reader may easily believe, threw the whole establishment into sudden consternation.

CHAPTER VIII.

SHIFTING WINDS.

IMMEDIATELY on receipt of the note referred to, vigorous preparations were made to convey relief to Roderick M'Leod. Such provisions as the party at Jenkins Creek could muster were packed into the smallest possible space because the boat, or cobble, which was to convey them down the gulf was very small—scarcely large enough to hold the party which meant to embark in it. This party consisted of M'Leod senior, Kenneth, and Flora, it being arranged that Ian and Rooney should remain to prosecute, as well as to guard, the works at the Creek.

Seeing that there was so little room to spare in the boat, Reginald Redding decided to hasten down on foot to the Cliff Fort, in order to see to the comfort of the wrecked men who had been sent there. He, however, offered the rescue party the services of his man, Le Rue, an offer which was accepted all the more readily that the Canadian possessed some knowledge of the coast.

It was very dark when they started, but, fortunately, calm. M'Leod had resolved to travel night and day, if the weather permitted, until he should reach the scene of the wreck, and to take snatches of rest if possible in the boat.

There were only two oars in the boat, so that one of its crew was always idle. This, however, proved to be rather an advantage, for, by affording frequent relief to each rower, it saved the strength of all, and at the same time enabled them to relieve the tedium of the journey to poor Flora.

At first they proceeded along under the deep shade of the ghost-like cliffs in unbroken silence, the mind of each no doubt being busy with the wreck of their last remnant of fortune, as well as with the dangerous condition in which the youthful Roderick lay; but as the dawn of day approached they began to talk a little, and when the sun arose its gladdening beams appeared to carry hope to each breast, inducing an almost cheerful state of mind. In the case of François Le Rue, the influence of sunshine was so powerful that a feeling of sympathy and respect for the M'Leods in the calamity which had overtaken them alone restrained him from breaking out into song!

"Father," said Flora, as her sire, wearied by a long spell at the bow oar, resigned his

seat to Kenneth, and sat down beside her, "that glorious light brings to my remembrance a very sweet verse, 'Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.'"

"True, true, Flo," returned her father, "I wish I had the simple faith that you seem to possess, but I haven't, so there's no use in pretending to it. This," he added bitterly, "seems only a pure and unmitigated disaster. The last remnant of my fortune is wrecked, I am utterly ruined, and my poor boy is perhaps dying."

Flora did not reply. She felt that in his present state of mind nothing she could say would comfort him.

At that moment Le Rue suddenly roused himself and suggested that it was about time to think of breakfast.

As all the party were of the same mind, the boat was allowed to drift down the gulf with the tide, while the pork and biscuit-bags were opened. Little time was allowed for the meal, nevertheless the mercurial Canadian managed, between mouthfuls, to keep up a running commentary on things in general. Among other things he referred to the property which his master had just purchased in Partridge Bay.

"Whereabouts is this property that you talk of?" asked M'Leod, becoming interested at the mention of Partridge Bay.

"About la tete of de village near de house of Monsieur Gambart."

"What like a place is it?" asked M'Leod, becoming suddenly much more interested.

"Oh! one place mos bootiful," replied Le Rue, with enthusiasm; "de house is superb, de grounds splendeed, et le prospect magnifique, wid plenty of duck—perhaps sometimes goose, vild vons—in von lac near cliff immense."

At the mention of the lake and the cliff M'Leod's brow darkened, and he glanced at Flora, who met his glance with a look of surprise.

"Did you happen to hear the name of the place?" asked M'Leod.

"Oui, it vas, I tink, Lac Do, or Doo—someting like so."

"The scoundrel!" muttered M'Leod between his teeth, while a gleam of wrath shot from his eyes.

Le Rue looked at him with some surprise, being uncertain as to the person referred to by this pithy remark, and Flora glanced at him with a look of anxiety.

After a brief silence he said to Flora in a low tone, as though he were expressing the continuation of his thoughts, "To think that the fellow should thus abuse my hospitality by inducing me to speak of our fallen fortunes, and of our being obliged to part with the old

home we had loved so well, and never to utter a word about his having bought the place."

"Perhaps," suggested Flora, "you had not mentioned the name of the place, and so it might not have occurred to him that—"

"Oh yes, I did," interrupted her father, with increasing anger as his memory recalled the converse with Redding on the preceding night, "I remember it well, for he asked the name, and I told it him. It's not that I care a straw whether the old place was bought by Tom, Dick, or Harry, but I can't stand his having concealed the fact from me after so much, I may say, confidential conversation about it and our affairs generally. When I meet him again the young coxcomb shall have a piece of my mind."

M'Leod was, as we have said, an angry man, and, as the intelligent reader well knows, angry men are apt to blind themselves and to become outrageously unreasonable. He was wrong in supposing that he did not care a straw who should have bought the old place. Without, perhaps, admitting it to himself, he had entertained a hope that the home which was intimately associated with his wife, and in which some of the happiest years of his life had been spent, would remain unsold until he should manage to scrape together money enough to re-purchase it. If it had been sold to the pro-

verbial Tom, or Dick, or Harry, he would have been bitterly disappointed, the fact that it was sold to one who had, as he thought, deceived him while enjoying his hospitality, only served as a reason for his finding relief to disappointment in indignation. Flora, who had entertained similar hopes in regard to Loch Dhu, shared the disappointment, but not the indignation, for, although it did seem unaccountable that one so evidently candid and truthful as Redding should conceal the actual state of matters, she felt certain that there was some satisfactory explanation of the mystery, and in that state of mind she determined to remain until time should throw further light on the affair.

Neither she nor her father happened to remember that the truth had broken on Redding at the moment when the Indian entered the hut at Jenkins Creek with the news of the wreck, which created such a sudden excitement there that it banished thoughts of all other things from the minds of every one.

The elder M'Leod was a man of very strong and sensitive feelings, so that, although possessed of an amiable and kindly disposition, he found it exceedingly difficult to forget injuries, especially when these were unprovoked. His native generosity might have prompted him perhaps to find some excuse for the fur-trader's apparent want of candour, or

to believe that there might be some explanation of it, but, as it was, he flung into the other scale not only the supposed injury inflicted by Redding, but all his weighty disappointments at the loss of his old home, and of course generosity kicked the beam!

Acting on these feelings, he turned the bow of the boat inshore without uttering a word, and when her keel grated on the gravelly beach, he looked somewhat sternly at Le Rue, and said:—

"You may jump ashore, and go back to your fort."

"Monsieur?" exclaimed Le Rue, aghast with surprise.

"Jump ashore," repeated M'Leod, with a steady, quiet look of impassibility. "Go, tell your master that I do not require further assistance from him."

The Canadian felt that M'Leod's look and tone admitted of neither question nor delay. His surprise therefore gave way to a burst of indignation. He leaped ashore with a degree of energy that sent the little boat violently off the beach, and the shingles spurted from his heels as he strode into the forest, renewing his vows of vengeance against his late friends and old enemies, "de Maclodds!"

CHAPTER IX.

SURMISINGS, DISAGREEMENTS, VEXATIONS, AND BOTHERATIONS.

GREAT was the amazement and perplexity of Reginald Redding when his faithful cook returned to the Cliff Fort bearing the elder M'Leod's message. At first he jumped to the conclusion that M'Leod had observed his affection for Flora, and meant thus to give him a broad hint that his addresses were not agreeable. Being, like M'Leod, an angry man, he too became somewhat blind. All his pride and indignation were aroused. The more he brooded over the subject, however, the more he came to see that this could not be the cause of M'Leod's behaviour. He was terribly perplexed, and, finally, after several days, he determined to go down to the scene of the wreck and demand an explanation.

"It is the proper course to follow," he muttered to himself, one day after breakfast, while brooding alone over the remnants of the meal, "for it would be unjust to allow myself to lie under a false imputation, and it would

be equally unjust to allow the M'Leods to remain under a false impression. Perhaps some enemy may have put them against me. Anyhow, I shall go down and try to clear the matter up. If I succeed—well. If not—"

His thoughts were diverted at this point by the entrance of Bob Smart. That energetic individual had been to visit the frost-bitten seamen, for whose comfort an old outhouse had been made weather-tight, and fitted up as a rough-and-ready hospital.

"They 're all getting on famously," said Bob, rubbing his hands, as he sat down and pulled out the little black pipe to which he was so much addicted. "Green's left little toe looks beautiful this morning, quite red and healthy, and, I think, won't require amputation, which is well, for it is doubly a *left* little toe since you cut off the right one yesterday. His big toe seems to my amateur eye in a thoroughly convalescent state, but his left middle finger obviously requires removal. You 'll do it to-day, I suppose?"

"Yes, I meant to do it yesterday," answered Redding, with much gravity, "but gave it another chance. How 's Brixton?"

"Oh, he 's all right. He groans enough to make one believe he 's the worst of 'em all, but his hurts are mostly skin deep, and will heal no doubt in course of time. His nose,

certainly, looks blobby enough, like an over ripe plum, and I rather think it's that which makes him growl so horribly; but, after all, it won't be shortened more than quarter of an inch, which will be rather an advantage, for it was originally too long. Then as to Harper and Jennings, they are quite cheery and their appetites increasing, which is the best of signs, though, I fear, poor fellows, that the first will lose a hand and the other a foot. The dressings you put on yesterday seem to have relieved them much. I wish I could say the same for the poor nigger. His foot is sure to go. It's in such a state that I believe the cleverest surgeon alive couldn't save it, and even if he could what's left of it would be of no use. You know I have a mechanical turn and could make him a splendid wooden leg if you will pluck up courage to cut it off."

"No," said Redding, decidedly; "it's all very well to lop off a finger or a toe with a razor, but I don't think it's allowable for an amateur to attempt a foot except under circumstances of extreme urgency."

"Well, it don't much matter," continued Bob Smart, drawing vigorously at the black pipe, "for we'll have an oppportunity of sending them up to Quebec in a week or so, and in the meántime the poor fellows are very jolly considering their circumstances.

That man Ned Wright keeps them all in good humour. Although, as you know, he has suffered severely in hands and feet, he feels himself well enough to limp about the room and act the part, as he says, of "stooard and cook to the ship's company." He insisted on beginning last night just after you left, and I found him hard at it this morning when I went to see them. He must have been the life of the ship before she went ashore, for he goes about continually trolling out some verses of his own composing, though he has got no more idea of tune in him than the main-top-mast-back-stay, to which, or something of the same kind, he makes very frequent reference. Here is a verse of his latest composition :—

O-o-o-o-h ! it 's once I froze the end of my nose,
On the coast of Labrador, sir,
An' I lost my smell, an' my taste as well,
An' my pipe, which made me roar, sir ;
But the traders come, an' think wot they done !
They poked an' pinched an' skewered me ;
They cut an' snipped, an' they carved an' ripped,
An' they clothed an' fed an' cured me.

Chorus.—Hooroo ! it 's true !
An' a sailor's life for me.

"Not bad, eh ?" said Bob.

"Might be worse," answered Redding, with the air of one whose mind is pre-occupied.

"I've often wondered," coutinued Bob Smart,

in a moralizing tone, and looking intently at the wreaths of smoke that curled from his lips as if for inspiration, "I've often wondered how it is that sailors—especially British sailors—appear to possess such an enormous fund of superabundant rollicking humour, insomuch that they will jest and sing sometimes in the midst of troubles and dangers that would take the spirit out of ordinary men such as you and me."

"Bob Smart," said Redding, earnestly.

"Yes," said Bob.

"D'you know it strikes me that I ought to go down to the wreck to see how the M'Leods are getting on."

"O ah! well, to change the subject, d'you know, Mr. Redding, that same idea struck me some days ago, for Jonas Bellew has left them to look after his own affairs, and the Indians were to go north on the 13th, so the M'Leods must have been living for some time on salt provisions unless they have used their guns with better success than has been reported of them. If you remember, I have mentioned it to you more than once, but you seemed to avoid the subject."

"Well, perhaps I did, and perhaps I had my reasons for it. However, I am going down now, immediately after dressing the poor fellows' sores. Will you therefore be good enough to get the small boat ready, with some

fresh meat, and tell Le Rue and Michel to be prepared to start in an hour or so."

The day after the above conversation M'Leod senior walked down to the wreck accompanied by Flora. Kenneth had been left in charge of the invalid, whose system had received such a shock that his recovery was extremely slow, and it had been deemed advisable not only to avoid, but to forbid all reference to the wreck. Indeed Roderick himself seemed to have no desire to speak about it, and although he had roused himself on the arrival of his relations, he had hitherto lain in such a weak semi-lethargic state that it was feared his head must have received severer injury than was at first supposed. On the morning of the day in question an Indian had arrived with a letter from Mr. Gambart of Partridge Bay, which had not tended to soothe the luckless father.

"It seems very unfortunate," said Flora, in a sympathetic tone.

"*Seems* unfortunate!" exclaimed M'Leod, with some asperity, "it *is* unfortunate. Why, what could be more so? Just think of it, Flo! Here am I without a penny of ready cash in the world, and although Gambart knows this as well as I do myself, he writes me, first, that he has sold Loch Dhu to that fellow Redding, and now that he has bought Barker's Mill for me without my sanction!"

VISITING THE WRECK.

"But you gave him leave to sell Loch Dhu," suggested Flora.

"Oh yes, yes, of course, and I told him to let it go at a low sum, for I needed cash very much at the beginning of this venture at Jenkins Creek. But I find our expenses are so small that I could afford to hold on for some time on the funds I have. To be sure Gambart could not know that, but—but—why did the fellow go and buy that mill for me? It's being a great bargain and a splendid property just now are no excuse, for he knew my poverty, and also knew that I shall feel bound in honour to take it off his hands when I manage to scrape the sum together, because of course it was done in a friendly way to oblige me. No doubt he will say that there's no hurry about repayment, and that he won't take interest, and so forth, but he had no business to buy it all!"

Flora made no reply to this, for she saw that her father was waxing wroth under his misfortunes. Her silence tended rather to increase his wrath, for he was dissatisfied with himself more than with others, and would have been glad even of contradiction in order that he might relieve his feelings by disputation.

While this state of mind was strong upon him they reached a turn in the path that brought the wreck into view and revealed the

fact that a boat lay on the beach, from which three men had just landed. Two of these remained by the boat, while the third advanced towards the woods.

Flora's hand tightened on her father's arm.

"Surely that is Mr. Redding," she said.

The frown which had clouded M'Leod's brow instantly deepened. "Go," he said, "walk slowly back towards the hut. I will overtake you in a few minutes."

Flora hesitated. "Won't you let me stay, father?"

"No, my dear, I wish to talk privately with Redding—go."

He patted her kindly on the head, and she left him with evident reluctance.

"Good-morning, Mr. M'Leod," said Redding, as he approached.

"Good-morning, "replied the other, stiffly, without extending his hand.

Redding flushed, but restrained himself, and continued in a calm matter-of-course tone:—

"Thinking it probable that you might be in want of fresh provisions, I have run down with a small supply, which is at your service."

"Thank you," replied M'Leod, still stiffly, "I am not quite destitute of fresh provisions, and happen to have a good supply of ammunition; besides, if I were starving I would not accept aid from one who has deceived me."

"Deceived you!" exclaimed Redding, waxing indignant more at M'Leod's tone and manner than his words, "wherein have I deceived you?"

As he put the question his mind leaped to the line of demarcation between the properties at Jenkins Creek, and he racked his brains hastily to discover what he could have said or done at their first interview that could have been misunderstood. M'Leod was one of those men in whom anger is easily increased by the exhibition of anger in others. It was therefore in a still more offensive tone that he said :—

"Sir, you deceived me by violating the laws of hospitality—by keeping silence when candour required you to speak."

"Sir," exclaimed Redding, still thinking of the line of demarcation and losing his temper altogether, "in all that has passed between us I have invariably spoken with candour, and if at any time I have kept silence I consider that in so doing I have done you a favour."

When two fiery men clash, an explosion is the natural result.

"Very well, sir," said M'Leod, with a look of withering contempt, "as I don't accept your favours I don't thank you for them, so you may take yourself off as soon as you please.

He waited for no reply but turned abruptly on his heel and walked away, while Redding

vith a face of scarlet, strode down the beach nd leaped into his boat.

Not a word did he utter to his astonished men beyond ordering them to pull back to the fort. Apparently the rate of rowing was not fast enough to please him, for in a few minutes he ordered Michel to take the helm, and himself seized the oar, which he plied with such vigour that, as Michel afterwards averred, the rudder had to be kept nearly hard a-port all the time to prevent the boat being pulled round even though Le Rue was working like a steam engine and blowing like a grampus!

Towards the afternoon this exercise, coupled with reflection, cooled Reginald Redding's spirit while it warmed his body, and at last he deemed it right to pause for the purpose of letting the men have a pipe and a mouthful of food. While they were busy refreshing themselves he leant over the stern, gazed down into the water, and brooded over his supposed wrongs.

Whether it was the clearness of the still water, through which he could see the little fish and crabs floating and crawling placidly among the pebbles at the bottom, or the soothing influence of the quiet afternoon, or the sedative effect of a reflective condition of mind, we know not, but it is certain that before the pipes were smoked out the fur-trader observed

that his reflected visage wore a very unpleasant-looking frown, insomuch that a slight smile curled his lips. The contrast between the frowning brows and the smiling lips appeared so absurd that to prevent the impropriety of becoming too suddenly good-humoured, he turned his eyes toward his men and encountered the perplexed gaze of Le Rue, as that worthy sat with his elbows on his knees in the calm enjoyment of his pipe.

Redding at once resumed his frown.

"François," said he, "did you have much conversation with M'Leod before he dismissed you on the way down?"

"Oui, Monsieur, we had ver moche conversatione."

"Can you remember what it was about?"

"Oh oui. 'Bout a'most all tings. I tell him de mos' part of my histoire,—me fadder, me moder, broders, sister, an' all dat, 'bout vich he seem not to care von buttin. Den ve convarsatione 'bout de fur-trade, an' de—"

"Well well," interrupted Redding, "but what was the last thing, just before he sent you off?"

"Ah! let me zee. Oui—it was 'bout you'-self. I tell him 'bout de property—de Lock Doo vat you was—"

"Le Rue," exclaimed Redding, suddenly and very angrily, "you 're a consummate ass!"

"Vraiment," said Le Rue with a slight shrug

of his shoulders, "I am so for remaining in de service of von goose!"

There was such good-humoured impudence in the man's face as he said this that Redding laughed in spite of himself.

"Well," he said, "your readiness to talk has at all events caused bad feeling between me and the M'Leods. However, it don't matter. Ship your oars again and give way with a will."

The men obeyed, and as Redding sat buried in meditation at the helm he became convinced that M'Leod's anger had been aroused by his silence in regard to the purchase of Loch Dhu, for he himself had almost forgotten that the sudden entrance of the Indian had checked the words which were at the moment on his lips. When he thought of this, and of Flora, he resolved to pull back and explain matters, but when he thought of M'Leod's tone and manner he determined to proceed to the fort. Then, when he thought of Roderick's precarious state, his mind again wavered, but, other thoughts and plans suggesting themselves, he finally decided on returning home.

That night he encamped in the woods and continued to brood over the camp-fire long after his men were asleep. Next day he reached the Cliff Fort, when, after seeing to the welfare of the wrecked men, he informed Bob Smart that he meant to absent himself for

about a week, and to leave him, Bob, in charge. He also gave orders that no one should quit the post, or furnish any assistance to the M'Leods.

"But, sir," said Bob Smart, in surprise, "they will be sure to starve."

"No fear of them," replied Redding, "Kenneth is young and active, and they have plenty of ammunition."

"If report be true," returned Bob, "neither Kenneth nor any of his kin can hit a sheep at twenty yards off. Bellew says they are as blind as bats with the gun."

"No matter. They have a boat, and one of them can row back to Jenkins Creek for fresh meat. Anyway, do as I bid you, and be very careful of the wrecked men."

Smart, although fond of discussion, knew how to obey. He therefore said no more but bade Redding good-night and retired to his humble couch, which, he was wont to say, was a fine example of compensation, inasmuch as the fact of its being three inches too narrow was counterbalanced by its being six inches too long.

CHAPTER X.

A FRIEND IN NEED.

"LOOK here, my love," said plump little Mr. Gambart to his plump little wife, bustling into the parlour with an open letter in his hand, "isn't this vexatious! Just listen —it 's from M'Leod :—

"'MY DEAR GAMBART,—I take the opportunity of Jonas Bellew leaving me to write a line in reply to your last, which was brought on to me by the Indian. You will be sorry to learn that the *Betsy* of Plymouth, in which all my goods were embarked, is lying here a total wreck, and the goods have been washed out of her—not a bale or cask saved! But, worse than that, poor Roderick has been badly injured in getting ashore, and now lies here unable to move. Many of the poor fellows who composed the crew have been lost, and those saved are in a sad condition. I was sorry to hear of Loch Dhu being sold, but now that my fortunes have been so utterly and literally wrecked it is perhaps as well as it is. I 'm sorry, however, that you bought Barker's Mill for me. In the

circumstances I will find it difficult to repay you for a long time to come.'

"Now," said Gambart, "isn't this vexing? I thought it would please him so much, for of course he knows that I would never press him for the money."

"Did you tell him," asked Mrs. Gambart, "that in the event of his not wanting the mill you would gladly take it yourself?"

"No, I didn't think that necessary."

"Didn't I," continued the little lady, pursing her little mouth, "didn't I advise you to do so at the time?"

"You certainly did, my dear."

"And did I not," continued Mrs. G., severely, "advise you, further, *not* to keep Mr. Redding in ignorance as to who was the late owner of Loch Dhu, for fear of mischief coming of it?"

"Yes, my love," answered Gambart, with ever-increasing humility, "but no mischief *has* come of it apparently, and I thought—"

"Oh yes," interrupted his lady, "I know you *thought*. You always think when you shouldn't, and you never think when you should."

In his heart the little man repelled this accusation, but thought it best in the circumstances to hold his tongue. After a moment or two the lady went on:—

"Besides, you don't know that no mischief has come of it. Take my advice now. Write im-

mediately to Mr. M'Leod, telling him that you only ventured to buy the mill for him because you were very anxious to secure it for yourself in the event of his not wanting it, and add that in the selling of Loch Dhu you concealed from Mr. Redding the name of the former owner because of an absurd fancy in your own mind which it is not worth while to mention."

"Won't that be a sort of humiliating confession?" urged the little man, timidly.

To this the little woman replied that it was better to make a *sort of* humiliating confession than to admit the full extent of his unreasoning stupidity; and the surveyor, half agreeing with her in his own mind, immediately went to his study, wrote the epistle as directed, and sent it off express by an Indian.

Meanwhile the party at the wreck found themselves in the unpleasant condition of having nothing fresh to eat. As we have said, the trapper had left them, knowing that the fur-traders and the Indians were quite capable of looking after their wants. But soon afterwards the Indians went away down the gulf to hunt seals, and none of the M'Leods being able to speak their language, they could not, or would not, be got to understand that one of them was wanted to remain and hunt for the sick man. As M'Leod had still some provisions on hand, with a gun and ammunition

besides his boat, he did not much mind the departure of the red men at the time. As time wore on, however, and their fresh provisions failed, he became anxious, and wished that he had not so angrily declined the aid offered by the fur-traders. Neither father nor son had the slightest taste for field sports, so that when they saw the track of an animal they found it almost impossible to follow it up with success, and when, by good fortune, they chanced to discover a "partridge" or a squirrel they invariably missed it! This incapacity and a scarcity of game had at last reduced them to extremities.

"Kenneth," said his father one morning, as they walked up and down beside the hut in which Flora sat talking to Roderick, "we must give up our vain attempts at hunting, for it is quite plain that you and I are incapable of improvement. After that splendid shot of yours, in which you only blew a bunch of feathers out of a bird that was not more than four yards from the end of your gun—"

"That," interrupted Kenneth, "was the very cause of my missing. Had it been a little farther off I should certainly have killed it. But, father, you seem to forget the squirrel's tail, which is the only trophy you have to show of your prowess after blazing away right and left for two weeks!"

"No, I don't forget it, lad," returned his father, "it is because of these sad truths that I have now determined to give it up and send you with the boat for supplies to Jenkins Creek. Of course Ian cannot send to us, having no boat, and Rooney or the Indian would take too long a time to scramble through the tangled woods of this rugged part of the coast, besides which, all they could carry on their backs would not last more than a few days, and as long as Ian does not hear from us he will naturally think that all is going on well. It will take you six days to go and come, but, what with the little that remains of our fresh meat and a chance partridge or two, we shall be able to keep Roderick going till you return. He's getting stronger now, and as for Flo and me, we can get along famously with salt pork and biscuit for so short a time."

"But why should I not go rather to the Cliff Fort?" asked Kenneth. "The store there is a public one, and our buying food from the fur-traders will lay us under no obligation to Mr. Redding, whom, excuse me, I think you have judged too hastily."

"It matters not how I have judged him," retorted M'Leod, sternly. "There is no occasion to go near him at all. As I have said—"

He stopped abruptly, for at that moment an Indian was seen approaching.

He was a powerfully-built fellow, with a handsome figure and face, though the latter was very dark, and he walked with a stoop and an awkward slouching gait. He wore his long black hair in straight elfin locks; those in front having been cut across the forehead just above the eye-brows as being the simplest method of clearing the way for vision. He was clad in a very dirty soiled hunting-shirt and leggings of leather, with moccasins of the same, and carried a long gun on his shoulder. M'Leod also observed, with much satisfaction, that several partridges hung by their necks from the belt which encircled his waist.

Of course the meeting that ensued was conducted in pantomime, with a few useless remarks in English from Kenneth, who appeared to entertain an idea which is not uncommon among sailors, namely, that a man who knows nothing whatever of the language is more likely to understand bad than good English! "Where you come from?" he asked, after shaking hands with the Indian and giving him the salutation, "watchee" (what cheer?), which he understood, and returned.

A shake of the head was the reply.

"Where you go—*go?*" said Kenneth, in the hope apparently that emphasis might awaken intelligence.

Again the Indian shook his head.

"What 's the use of asking him?" said M'Leod senior. "See, here is a language that is understood by all men."

He pulled a powder-flask from his pocket, and, shaking it at the ear of the savage, offered it to him, at the same time pointing to the partridges and to his own open mouth.

This pantomime was evidently comprehensible, for the man at once threw the birds at M'Leod's feet, and, taking the flask, emptied its contents into his own powder-horn.

"Good," said M'Leod, picking up the birds. "Now, Kenneth, if we can prevail on this redskin to remain by us it won't be necessary to send you to Jenkins Creek."

As he spoke, Flora issued from the opening of the tarpaulin tent, exclaiming—

"Father, I've just—"

On seeing the red man she stopped and gazed at him with much interest. The native returned the gaze, and for one moment a gleam of admiration lighted up his swarthy countenance, but it passed like a flash of light and left that stoical look of impassibility so common to the men of the American wilderness.

"What were you about to say, Flo?" asked her father.

"That I've just learned a piece of good news from Roderick. He seemed inclined to talk about the wreck this morning. Seeing

him so much better, I gave him encouragement, and he has just told me that before leaving England he had taken the advice of a friend and insured the whole of our goods that were shipped in the *Betsy*."

"That 's good news indeed, Flo; better than I deserve after my unbelieving remarks about the efficacy of prayer. And here is good news for you of another kind," he added, holding up one of the partridges, "fresh meat for Roderick, and a hunter who looks as if he could keep us well supplied if we can only prevail on him to stay with us. Try what you can do, Flo; if he has a spark of gallantry in him he will be sure to understand what you say to him; but it must be in the language of signs, Flo, for he evidently understands no English."

Thus appealed to, Flora advanced to the Indian, and, taking him somewhat timidly by the sleeve, led him to the opening of the tent and pointed to the sick man; then to the clean-scraped bones of the last rabbit he had eaten, after which she pointed to the game just purchased, touched the Indian's gun, and, making a sweep with her hand towards the forest, looked him full in the face.

The Indian allowed the faintest possible smile to curl his lips for a moment and then with a slight inclination of his head, but without uttering a word, turned abruptly

and went off at a long swinging pace into the woods.

"'Pon my word, Flo," said M'Leod, "your pantomime has been most effective, but I have doubts as to whether he understands you to have invited him to be our hunter, or commanded him to go about his business."

"I think we've seen the last of him," said Kenneth, somewhat gloomily.

"He will return," said Flora, with decision.

"Well, time will show," rejoined M'Leod, "meanwhile we will delay the trip to Jenkins Creek for a day, and I'll go have a talk with Roderick about that lucky insurance business."

Time did settle the matter of the Indian's intentions almost sooner than had been expected, for that same evening he returned with a further supply of fresh meat and laid it down at Flora's feet. Nothing, however, would prevail on him to remain and sup with the party. Having received a small supply of powder and shot in payment, he at once turned away and re-entered his native wilderness.

Thus day by day for about a week the silent man made his appearance every evening with fresh supplies, and, we might almost say, disappeared after delivering them. One day Kenneth determined to offer to accompany him on his next appearance. Accordingly he prepared his gun, rolled up his blanket and

strapped it on his shoulders, and when the Indian arrived in the evening as usual he presented himself equipped for the chase.

The Indian expressed some surprise in his looks, and at first seemed to object to Kenneth's companionship, but at length gave in and they entered the forest togther.

It seemed at first as if the red man wished to test the physical powers of his white brother, for he led him over hill and dale, through swamp and brake, during the greater part of that night. Fortunately there was bright moonlight. But Kenneth was stout of frame and enduring in spirit; he proved to be quite a match for the red-skin.

At last they encamped under a tall pine, and, after a hearty supper, sat staring at each other and smoking in silence until sleep induced them to lie down. Next morning by daybreak Kenneth was roused by his companion, who, after a hasty meal, led him another long march through a wild but beautiful country, where several partridges and rabbits were shot by the Indian, and a great many more were missed by Kenneth, much to the amusement of his companion.

Towards evening the red man turned his steps in the direction of the tarpaulin tent.

CHAPTER XI.

AN ADVENTURE AND A SURPRISE.

THAT evening the elder M'Leod and Flora had an adventure which nearly cost them their lives.

As the sun began to descend, Roderick, who was recovering fast under the influence of good-cheer and good nursing, begged Flora to go out and walk with her father as she had not left his side all day.

She consented, and sauntered with her father in the direction of the sea-shore.

Now it so happened that a brown bear, of a species which is still to be found on the uninhabited parts of the Labrador coast, had selected that hour and that locality for his own evening promenade! At a certain part of the slight track which had been formed by the M'Leods in their visits to the shore, the bushes were very thick, and here, on rounding a bend in the track, they met the bear face to face. Had there been some little space between them, the animal would probably have turned

and fled; but, being taken by surprise, he stood fast.

M'Leod and his daughter stood aghast on seeing the monster. The former was unarmed, with the exception of a small hunting-knife and a stout walking-stick. In the first rush of his feelings he suddenly flung his stick at the bear, and with so true an aim, that the heavy head struck it exactly on the point of its nose. Nothing could have been more unfortunate, for the creature's rage was at once excited. With a savage growl he rose on his hind legs in the attitude of attack.

"Quick! run back, Flo, I'll check him here," cried M'Leod, drawing the little hunting-knife.

But poor Flora was incapable of running. White with terror she stood gazing at the bear as if fascinated. Her father, seeing this, stepped in front of her with that overwhelming rush of determination which is sometimes felt by courageous men when under the influence of despair, for he felt that with such a weapon he might as well have assailed an elephant.

At that moment the well-known voice of Kenneth was heard to utter a tremendous shout close at hand. Almost at the same instant a sharp crack was heard and the bear fell at M'Leod's feet, shot through the heart.

We need scarcely say that it was a ball

from the gun of the Indian which had thus opportunely put an end to the bear's career, and still less need we remark that profuse and earnest were the thanks bestowed on him by the whole party.

"We must christen you Sharpeye after this lucky shot," said Kenneth, when the excitement had subsided. "Now, Sharpeye," he added, taking his red friend by the arm, "you *must* stay and sup with us to-night. Come along, whether you understand me or not, I'll take no denial."

If the Indian did not understand the language of his friends he evidently understood their pantomime, for he made no further objection to remain, but accompanied them to the camp, and sat silently smoking at their fire, which was kindled in front of the tent door, so that the sick man might enjoy the blaze as well as the companionship.

While thus engaged they were suddenly interrupted by the appearance of another Indian, who advanced quietly into the circle of light and sat down.

"A messenger, no doubt," said M'Leod, after the first salutation.

A messenger he indeed proved to be, for after casting a furtive look, not unmingled with surprise and suspicion, at his brother red-skin, he opened a small bag which hung at

his girdle and delivered to M'Leod senior a very dirty-looking letter.

"Ha! from Gambart," he exclaimed, reading the inscription. "Let us see what—Hallo! Sharpeye, where are you off to?"

This question was called forth in consequence of the red man rising quietly and throwing his gun on his shoulder. Instead of replying, however, he turned abruptly and walked off into the woods.

"The most unaccountable man I ever knew," exclaimed Kenneth. "I shouldn't wonder if this messenger and he are implacable foes and can't bear to sit at the same fire together."

The remark which Kenneth began half in jest was finished in earnest, for he had not done speaking when the messenger also arose and glided into the woods.

"Get the gun ready," said M'Leod, unfolding the letter, "there's no saying what these fellows may do when their blood's up."

Kenneth obeyed, while his father read the letter, which, as the reader has no doubt guessed, was that written by Gambart at his imperious little wife's command.

"I was *sure* there must be some satisfactory explanation of the matter," said Flora, when her father had finished reading.

"So was I," said Kenneth, examining the priming of his gun.

The elder M'Leod felt and looked uncomfortable.

"What is it all about?" asked Roderick, from the tent.

"Oh, nothing particular," answered his father, "except that there have been some mistakes and foolish concealments in connexion with a certain Reginald Redding, whom I fear I have been rather hasty in judging."

"Well, that needn't trouble you," returned Roderick, "for you've only to explain the mistakes and confess your haste."

"Hm! I suppose I must," said M'Leod, "and I rather think that Flora will—"

A deep blush and an imploring look from Flora stopped him.

Just then a rustle was heard among the leaves outside the circle of the camp-fire's light, and Kenneth cocked his gun as Sharpeye stalked forward and sat solemnly down by the fire.

"I hope you haven't killed him, Sharpeye," said Kenneth, looking with some anxiety at the Indian's girdle as though he expected to see a fresh and bloody scalp hanging there.

Of course the Indian gave no answer, but the minds of all were immediately relieved by seeing the messenger return and sit down as he had done before, after which he opened his bag, and, drawing out another letter, handed it to M'Leod.

"What! another letter? Why did you not deliver it with the first? Forgot, I suppose—eh! What have we here? It's from—I do believe, it's from Reginald Redding. The Indian must have called at the Cliff Fort in passing, but however he got it, here it is, so I'll read it:—

"'DEAR SIR (Hm, rather friendly, considering),—After leaving you on the occasion of our last unsatisfactory meeting (I should think it was), it occurred to me that such indignation on your part (not to mention his own!) must have been the result of some mistake or misapprehension. After some reflection I recalled to mind that on the night I first met you, and learned that the name of your property in Partridge Bay was Loch Dhu, the sudden entrance of the messenger with the sad and startling news of the wreck prevented my telling you that I had become the purchaser of that property, and that, strange though it may seem to you, I did not up to that moment know the name of the person from whom I had bought it. This ignorance was owing to a fancy of my friend, Mr. Gambart, to conceal the name from me—a fancy which I am still unable to account for, but which doubtless can be explained by himself. If this 'silence' on my part is, as I think probable, the cause of your supposing that I intentionally 'deceived' you, I trust that you will find this explanation

sufficient to show that you have been labouring under a mistake. (No doubt I was.) If, on the other hand, I am wrong in this conjecture, I trust that you will do me the justice to point out the so-called deception of which I am supposed to be guilty, in order that I may clear myself from a false imputation.'"

"Well, father, that clears up the matter sufficiently, doesn't it?" said Kenneth.

"It does, unquestionably," replied M'Leod, "especially when coupled with the letter from Gambart, which has so strangely reached us at the same time with that of Redding. Well well, after all, things looked bad to me at first. I'm sorry, however, that I gave way to temper when we met, for the explanation might have come at that time; but the hot-headed young fellow gave way to temper too!"

M'Leod said this in the tone of a man who, while admitting his fault, looks about for palliating circumstances.

"However," he continued, rising and folding the letter, "I must write at once to let him know that his explanation is satisfactory, and that—that—"

"That you apologize for your haste," said Flora, with a laugh.

"Certainly not," replied M'Leod, stoutly. "I forgive *him* for getting angry with *me*, but I am not called on to ask forgiveness for being

indignant with a man whom I supposed I had good reason to believe was a deceiver."

"It is not necessary to ask forgiveness when no offence was meant," said Sharpeye, in good English as he suddenly rose, and, advancing to the elder M'Leod, held out his hand.

M'Leod gazed at the Indian for a moment in silent amazement.

"I fear," continued Sharpeye, with a smile, "that I have to ask your forgiveness for having ventured really to practise deception on you."

He removed a dark wig as he spoke, and revealed to the astonished gaze of the M'Leods the light curly hair of Reginald Redding!

"Miraculous apparition!" exclaimed M'Leod, grasping the proffered hand, "can I venture to believe my eyes?"

He glanced, as if for sympathy, to the spot where Flora had been seated; but Flora, for reasons best known to herself, had quietly retired to the interior of the tarpaulin tent and was just then absorbed in her duties as nurse to the invalid.

CHAPTER XII.

THE LAST.

SEVERAL months after the events narrated in the last chapter a very merry party was assembled in Mr. Wm. Gambart's drawing-room at Partridge Bay.

The party was small, by reason of the drawing-room not being large, but it was very select and remarkably hearty. Plump little Gambart was there, beaming with good-will. His plump little partner was also there, radiant with matronly smiles, his plump little daughters too, bewitching with youthful beauty, set off by indescribable flounces, combined with flutterings of white lace. Their aspect was also rendered more captivating and charmingly confused by ribbons, rings, and ringlets, for the reader must remember that we write of those good old times before the introduction of that severely classic style of hair-dressing which converts now nine-tenths of the fair sex into human cockatoos.

Among the guests assembled were M'Leod

and his three sons, clad, not in the half trapper half Indian style in which they were introduced to the reader, but, in superfine broadcloth garments, the admirable fit of which suggested the idea that they must have been sewed on in Regent Street, London, and sent out to Canada with their owners in them, in separate boxes labelled "this side up, with care." There was also present Mr. Bob Smart, smarter in personal appearance than he had ever been before, in virtue of a blue surtout with brass buttons which had lain for many years on sale in the store at the Cliff Fort, but never had been bought because the Indians who coveted were too poor to purchase it, and no other human being in his senses would have worn it, its form being antique, collar exceedingly high, sleeves very tight and the two brass buttons behind being very close together and unreasonably high up. But Bob was not particular. Nothing, he said, would prevent him being at that party. He saw as well as felt that he looked like a maniac in the blue coat, but not possessing a dress-coat, and being possessed of moral heroism, he shut his mental eyes, ignored taste and feeling, put on the coat, and went.

Jonas Bellew was also there, in a new blue cloth capote, scarlet belt, and moccasins, in which he looked every inch a man, if not a gentleman. Sometimes in the kitchen, often

in the pantry, occasionally in the passages, and always in the way, for he was excitedly abrupt in his motions, might have been seen the face and figure of François Le Rue. François was obviously performing the part of a waiter, for he wore a badly-fitting suit of black, white cotton gloves three sizes too large, and pumps, with white socks, besides which he flourished a white napkin as if it were a war-banner, and held on tenaciously to a cork-screw.

The pretty face of Elise was also there, assisting to spread moral sunshine on the party and fair cloths on all the tables. A close observer might have noted that wherever Elise shone there Le Rue took occasion to sun himself!

Deep in the mysterious regions of the back-kitchen—which bore as much resemblance to civilized back-kitchens as an English forest does to the "back-woods"—Mister Rooney might have been seen, much dirtier than other people owing to the nature of his culinary occupations and his disregard of appearances. A huge favour, once white, but now dirty, decorated the Irishman's broad chest. Similar favours (not dirty), were pinned to the breasts of all the guests, giving unmistakeable evidence that the occasion was a wedding.

"Hooroo! ye descendant of an expatriated frog," cried Rooney, staggering under the weight of an enormous pot, "come here won't 'ee, an'

lind a hand. Wan would think it was yer own weddin' was goin' on. Here, slew round the crane, ye excitable cratur."

"Preehaps mes own veddin' vill foller ver' quick," said Le Rue, with a sly glance at Elise, as he assisted Rooney to suspend the big pot on its appropriate hook.

"Troth then, I can't compliment the taste o' the poor girl as takes 'ee," replied Rooney, with a still slyer glance at Elise.

The girl referred to remarked that no girl in her senses would accept either of them as a gift, and went off tossing her head.

Just then a cheer was heard in the lobby, and Elise, Le Rue, and Rooney rushed out in time to see Flora M'Leod like an April day—all smiles and tears—handed into a gig; she was much dishevelled by reason of the various huggings she had undergone from sundry bridesmaids and sympathetic female friends, chief among whom was a certain Mrs. Crowder, who in virtue of her affection for the M'Leod family, her age, and her deafness, had constituted herself a compound of mother and grandmama to Flora. The gig was fitted to hold only two. When Flora was seated, Reginald Redding—also somewhat dishevelled owing to the hearty, not to say violent, congratulations of his male friends—jumped in, seized the reins and cracked his whip. The horse being a young and spirited

animal, performed a series of demivolts which caused all the ladies to scream, threw the gig into convulsions, and old Mrs. Crowder almost into fits. Thereafter it shot away like an arrow amid ringing cheers and a shower of old slippers.

This was the last of Redding and Flora for that day, but it was by no means the last of the party. In those regions at that time (whatever they may do in those regions now-a-days) wedding parties were peculiarly festive scenes, in which dancing was one of the means by which not only the young but the middle-aged were wont to let off superabundant steam, and a violin more or less cracked and vigorously played was the instrument which created inspiration. It would take a volume to tell of all that was said and done on that great and memorable occasion—how the plump little Miss Gambarts fluttered about like erratic flowers, or like captivating comets drawing a long tail of the Partridge Bay young men after them; how, as the evening wore on, all social distinctions were swept away and the servants were invited to exchange duty in the kitchen for dancing in the hall; how Le Rue danced so often with Elise and made his admiration of her so obvious that she became quite ashamed of him and cast him off in favour of any one else who asked her; how Jonas Bellew was prevailed on to

ask Mrs. Crowder to dance a Scotch reel with him, which she not only agreed to do but did to the delight of Jonas and the admiration of all the company; how Mister Rooney volunteered to dance the sailor's hornpipe, and acquitted himself so well, despite the inability of the violinist to play the proper tune, that his performance was greeted with rapturous applause; how the floor at last began to show symptoms of giving way and how their only musician did finally give way, from sheer exhaustion, and thus brought matters to an abrupt close.

But all this, and a great deal more that we have not told, was as nothing compared to the "feast of reason and the flow of soul" that occurred at the supper, a meal which had been expressly reserved as a last resource when the violinist should break down. Another volume, at least, would be required to record it all.

There was food of course in profusion, and there was also, which is not always so common, splendid sauce in the form of appetite. There were also songs and toasts; and speeches which would have done credit to the halls of more civilized lands, in all of which the performers exhibited every phase of human nature from the sublime to the ridiculous.

At this stage of the proceedings M'Leod senior conducted himself with that manly straightforward vigour which had characterized

him during the earlier part of the festivities, though he faltered a little and almost broke down when, in a speech, he referred to Flora as a bright sunbeam whom God in His love had permitted to shine upon his path for many years, who in prosperity had doubled his joys, and who in adversity had taught him that the Hearer and Answerer of prayer not only can, but does bring good out of evil, of which fact he was a living instance that day, for it was the loss of his goods by shipwreck which had enabled him, at a critical moment in his affairs, to make a fresh start in life, that had now placed him on the road to prosperity, so that "*Wrecked but not ruined*" he thought, might be appropriately adopted as his family motto. It was this wreck also which had, in a great measure, brought him into intimate acquaintance with the man who had saved his daughter's life, as well as his own (cheers), and who had that day carried off a prize (renewed cheers), a jewel (enthusiastic cheers, in which the ladies attempted to transcend the gentlemen), he repeated, a prize, the true value of which was fully known only to himself.

Here the remainder of the speech—of which a few emphasized words, such as blessings, health, prosperity, etc., were heard—was lost in a burst of continuous cheering, which suddenly terminated in an uproarious shout of

laughter when Le Rue accidentally knocked the neck off a bottle of beer, whose contents spouted directly and violently into his face!

The touch of feeling displayed in M'Leod's speech filled little Mr. Gambart with an irresistible desire to start to his legs and "claim his rights." He regarded himself, in connexion with Mrs. Gambart, he said, with a winning smile at his fair partner, as the author and authoress (humanly speaking of course) of the whole affair, by which he meant the affair that had just come off so auspiciously. He had seen, and Mrs. G. had seen, from the very first, that Mr. Redding was deeply in love with Flora M'Leod (as how could he be otherwise), that he, Mr. G. (including Mrs. G.), foresaw that in selling Loch Dhu to Mr. Redding he was virtually sending it back to the M'Leod family; that unless he had concealed the name of the owners at first he could not have effected the sale, for Mr. Redding at that time thought the M'Leods were—were—. Here an awful frown from Mrs. Gambart, intimating that he (Gambart) was touching on subjects which he had no right to make public, threw him into confusion, out of which condition he delivered himself, amidst some laughter and much applause, by a bold and irrelevant continuation of the subject, to the effect that, knowing all that and a great deal more besides, he (includ-

ing Mrs. G.) had not only effected a sale which, he might say, was the main-sail that had caught the breezes of prosperity by which the craft of the M'Leods, so to speak, had been blown so happily that day into the Partridge Bay haven of felicity (tremendous cheering, during which Gambart wiped his bald head and flushed face, and collected himself). Moreover, he continued, it was he who, against M'Leod's will, had bought Barker's Mill (hear hear! from Bob Smart, who thought he was quoting poetry), and although, of course, he had not known that the goods in the *Betsy* were insured (at this point another frown pulled him up and made him reckless), he nevertheless would stoutly hold against any man (cheers) or woman (cheers and laughter), that he, including Mrs. G., had had a finger in the pie, which, after simmering for a considerable time (the pie, not the finger) in the oven of—of (cheers) ah! had that night been done (brown, from Bob Smart) *to a turn* (severely), and been dished up in such splendid style that a more auspicious climax could—could—

The remainder was drowned in vociferous cheering, in which Mr. Gambart himself joined, shook hands with the guests on each side of him, sat down, and blew his nose.

It was at this point that Bob Smart, overcome by a gush of feeling, burst into a song,

the burden of which was that the light of former days being faded, their glories past and shaded, and the joys of other days being too bright to last, it was not worth while doing more than making a simple statement of these facts without expressing a decided opinion either one way or another in regard to them.

As he sang this rather pretty song in the voice of a cracked tea-kettle, a thrill of delight ran through the company when deaf Mrs. Crowder, being ignorant of what was going on, suddenly said that as there seemed to be a pause in the flow of soul, she, although a woman, would venture to express a sentiment, if not to propose a toast. This was of course received with a shout of joy, which effectually quenched Mr. Smart. In a sweet tremulous little voice the old lady said, "let us wish, with all our hearts, that health, happiness, charity, and truth may dwell as long as it shall stand, under the rooftree of Loch Dhu!"

Of course this called M'Leod to his legs again, after which there were more speeches and more songs—both grave and gay—until "nature's sweet restorer, balmy sleep," began gently to tickle the guests, reminding them that felicity is not less enhanced by occasions of exuberant mirth than by periods of tranquil repose.

* * * *

What more can we say, good reader, than

that old Mrs. Crowder's wish was fulfilled to the letter, for a large family, trained by Redding and Flora to respect the laws of God and love the name of Jesus, caused the rooftree of Loch Dhu to ring full many a year thereafter with joyous tones that were the direct result of "health, happiness, charity, and truth."

M'Leod senior dwelt hard by, and was made glad, as well as thoughtful, by the sight. Ian and Kenneth made a comfortable livelihood out of the saw-mill at Jenkins Creek, which ultimately became a populous settlement, whither the young Reddings went annually in summer to enjoy themselves, in which enjoyment they were greatly aided by Jonas Bellew the trapper. Roderick was equally prosperous with Barker's Mill at Partridge Bay. Rooney continued to the end of his days in the service of his old master, while Le Rue and Elise, a happy couple, became respectively butler and cook at Loch Dhu, over the door of which establishment Redding had engraved his father-in-law's favourite motto—

"WRECKED BUT NOT RUINED."

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